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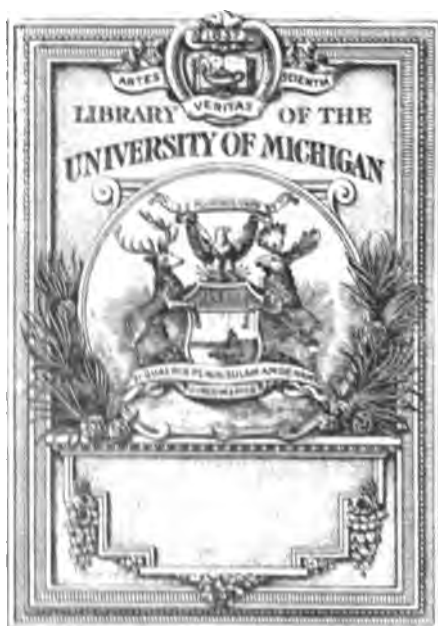
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THE

# PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

AUTHORISED EDITION.

## FOURTH SERIES:

COMMENCING WITH THE SECOND SESSION OF THE TWENTY-FIFTH PARLIAMENT

OF THE

UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND.

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### 57 VICTORIÆ.

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## VOLUME IX.

COMPRISING THE PERIOD FROM

THE TWENTY-FIRST DAY OF FEBRUARY

TO

THE THIRTEENTH DAY OF MARCH,

1893.

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EYRE AND SPOTTISWOODE,

*Her Majesty's Printers,*

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(UNDER CONTRACT WITH H.M. GOVERNMENT).

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1893.





**ERRATA.**

**23 February.** Page 259, line 7 from bottom, "Kenyon" read "*Kensington.*"



# THE PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

(Authorised Edition)

IN THE  
SECOND SESSION OF THE TWENTY-FIFTH PARLIAMENT OF  
THE UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND  
APPOINTED TO MEET 4 AUGUST 1892, IN THE FIFTY-SIXTH YEAR OF  
THE REIGN OF

HER MAJESTY QUEEN VICTORIA.

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SECOND VOLUME OF SESSION 1893.

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HOUSE OF LORDS,

Tuesday, 21st February 1893.

Several Lords—Took the Oath.

PUBLIC AUTHORITIES PROTECTION  
BILL. [H.L.](No. 6.)

SECOND READING.

Order of the Day for the Second  
Reading, read.

THE LORD CHANCELLOR (Lord  
HERSCHELL): My Lords, this is a Bill  
which was introduced by the noble and  
learned Lord who occupied the Wool-  
sack in the last Parliament, for the pur-  
pose of consolidating in one Statute the  
provisions on this subject which are now  
scattered over a number of Statutes for  
giving protection to Public Authorities  
who may have actions brought against  
them. The times in reference to notice  
and other particulars differ in many cases,  
and it is thought much better they should

be brought into one uniform system  
which will be applicable to all cases.  
The object of the Bill is considered to be  
very useful, and it passed both Houses  
and through the Statute Committee  
during last Parliament. I beg to move  
the Second Reading.

Moved, "That the Bill be now read  
2<sup>a</sup>."—(*The Lord Chancellor.*)

LORD ASHBOURNE: As your  
Lordships have heard from the noble and  
learned Lord on the Woolsack, this Bill  
was introduced in the last Parliament by  
the noble and learned Lord who then  
occupied the Woolsack, and it seeks to  
accomplish various reforms which are  
considered desirable in the matters which  
are referred to in the title of the Bill.  
There is one matter which, when the  
Bill reaches another stage, I will, with  
your Lordships' permission, call attention  
to, as it has been allowed to remain in  
the Bill; that is, that in *primâ facie*  
cases the venue shall be local. That is  
a matter which requires very serious  
consideration, because your Lordships

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will see at once that if, say, a Resident Magistrate in Ireland had locally to do something which somebody thought he was aggrieved by, and thereupon brought an action, for example, in Kerry, Clare, or Mayo, those would be the last places in which, in the interests of justice and for the purpose of securing an impartial trial, the trial should take place. Therefore, I should desire to reserve, for further consideration at a future stage of the Bill, the question whether it is advisable or not to retain that clause.

**THE LORD CHANCELLOR :** The matter to which the noble and learned Lord refers was brought before the House when the measure was under consideration in the last Parliament. Objection was then taken to the subsection relating to the venue. It is provided that a trial shall only take place where the action arises, unless the Judge orders otherwise. But it gives large powers in that respect. On that occasion the noble and learned Lord who then occupied the Woolsack undertook to meet the objection, and it was thought that it had been sufficiently met by the words at the beginning. The clause has been modified accordingly; but if the noble and learned Lord thinks that does not sufficiently meet the case, I shall be glad to re-consider the matter.

Motion agreed to; Bill read 2<sup>a</sup> accordingly, and committed to a Committee of the Whole House on Monday next.

#### SALE OF GOODS BILL [H. L.]—(No. 8.)

##### SECOND READING.

Order of the Day for the Second Reading, read.

**THE LORD CHANCELLOR :** My Lords, this also is a Bill which passed the Second Reading in this House during the last Parliament. It is a measure which, I believe, will be of great utility for the purpose of codifying the law relating to the sale of goods. It has undergone very great examination and consideration, and may now, I believe, be safely recommended to your Lordships. It differs only from the Bill which passed last Session in this respect: that there were then certain clauses inserted at the instance of my noble and learned Friend Lord Watson, for the purpose of extending the Bill to Scotland. The law of Scotland as to

the sale of goods differs, in certain particulars, from the law of England. As to almost all the particulars in which the law of the two countries differs, there was a common agreement; and both those who viewed the law from the English side, and those who viewed it from the Scotch side, saw their way to a mode of dealing with the Bill which gave complete satisfaction to the lawyers of both countries. But there were one or two matters in which the Scotch law differed from the English, and in which it was not possible to make the Statute satisfactory to the Scotch Lords. At all events, exception was taken somewhat vehemently in some quarters to the form in which these clauses were drawn. I should be most desirous of extending this Bill to Scotland, and of codifying in one Statute the law relating to so important a subject as the sale of goods, having regard to the law prevailing both in England and in Scotland, but your Lordships will easily understand that I am very anxious not to make this Bill contentious. The only possible chance of passing such a measure into law, a measure it is admitted of extreme utility, is to make it absolutely non-contentious; and whilst I should be thoroughly satisfied to re-introduce the Scotch clauses, if some common agreement could be arrived at among those who represent Scotland as to the form which those clauses should take, I should be unwilling to do so if thereby the Bill was made contentious, because that would mean that all chance of passing it and carrying into effect the object which is intended must be abandoned. I have thought it desirable to make this statement, in order to explain why the Scotch clauses are not found in the Bill at present. I beg to move the Second Reading.

Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2<sup>a</sup>."—(*The Lord Chancellor.*)

\***LORD WATSON** said, he entirely agreed with the Bill as introduced by the noble and learned Lord. It had been very carefully framed, but he did not think the omission of the Scotch clauses was an improvement in the Bill. It must be obvious that it would be of great importance to mercantile men, as well as to lawyers, that the whole Code relating to these matters should be found within the four corners of one Act. If separate legisla-

tion were introduced for Scotland about nine-tenths of exactly the same matter would be placed upon the Statute Book as appeared in the English Bill. Differences of opinion existed upon some points, but those points were comparatively trivial, and he thought that before the Bill passed such a fair agreement would be come to on the part of those interested from a Scotch point of view as would remove all fear of endangering the safety of the measure.

Motion agreed to; Bill read 2<sup>a</sup> accordingly, and committed to a Committee of the Whole House on Monday next.

#### BILLS OF SALE BILL [H.L.]—(No. 7.)

##### SECOND READING.

Order of the Day for the Second Reading, read.

THE LORD CHANCELLOR : My Lords, this is also a measure which passed through the sub-Committee of the Statute Committee during the last Parliament. It is for the purpose of placing the law relating to bills of sale on a more satisfactory footing than it is at present, its present condition being agreed by all to be eminently unsatisfactory. There is only one provision to which I will invite your Lordships' attention now, because it is a matter which has given rise to considerable controversy, and I should not be inclined to insist upon it if it is likely to create any very acute difference of opinion, for I think, apart from that particular question, the Bill will be found to be generally acceptable. That provision which has been now introduced relates to a matter which my noble and learned Friend who preceded me and myself have been very much pressed should be legislated upon. A system has grown up, as your Lordships are no doubt aware, of hiring and purchase, by which goods are supplied by tradesmen upon terms that it is to be a hiring only until they are paid for, when the hiring becomes a sale; so that if any of the hiring instalments remain unpaid a right exists on the part of the tradesman to resume possession of the goods he has supplied. The consequence, of course, is that such furniture in a house, which has nothing to distinguish it from other furniture which is the debtor's own pro-

perty becomes the property of the tradesman, and when an execution is put in by another creditor, under the impression that he is dealing with his debtor's furniture, he is met by a claim on behalf of the tradesman who has supplied furniture, and who insists that he shall withdraw from possession; and, of course, when part of the furniture has been acquired on this hire and sale system, and part of it is the debtor's own property, it is extremely difficult to ascertain which belongs to the debtor and which has been acquired by him under the hire and sale agreement. Representations have been made to me by traders that great injustice is thus done to them, inasmuch as they are never able to tell whether the furniture or goods in a house is the debtor's own property, or is that of the tradesman who has supplied him. There can be no doubt that this comes to a considerable extent within the mischief against which the law relating to bills of sale is intended to strike, because while the possession and apparent ownership is in one person the property is really in another. Of course, I do not mean to say that this is entirely on all fours with the cases intended to be provided for by the Bills of Sale Act. I have now stated to your Lordships the case for legislation on the subject. But then, on the other hand, it is represented that this system of hire and sale has so far become in common use that it would be a great blow to the system if you were to compel registration of the transactions by which these arrangements are carried out; that people who have bought on the hire and sale system would not like registration, and that they would cease to enter into these agreements if a tradesman was compelled to effect such registration so as not to run the risk of having his goods taken in case of an execution against or of the bankruptcy of the hirer. That, my Lords, is the case on the one side and on the other. I have thought it well to introduce into the Bill a provision meeting the case; but, as I have said, it would certainly not be expedient to risk the passing of the Bill on account of acute controversy on a matter of that description. If it appears that is likely to be the effect of retaining it in the Bill I am afraid that matter must be left for legislation on another occasion, and the Bill must be confined to the mere consolida-

tion with some improvements of existing law on the subject.

Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2<sup>a</sup>."—(*The Lord Chancellor*).

**LORD ASHBOURNE:** My Lords, there is no doubt that this Bill which has been introduced by the noble and learned Lord will be a very useful measure. As to the particular case to which he has, I think, rightly directed your Lordships' special attention, that is a matter as to which there is considerable difference of opinion, and as to which it would be well for us to be quite sure we are legislating in consonance with the opinions of those interested in it. Therefore, I hope the noble and learned Lord will allow some little time to elapse before the Committee stage of the Bill, in order that we may know what is likely to be considered by them best to be done in the matter.

Motion agreed to; Bill read 2<sup>a</sup> accordingly, and committed to a Committee of the Whole House on Monday next.

#### AGRICULTURAL INQUIRY.

##### QUESTION—OBSERVATIONS.

**THE EARL OF DUNRAVEN** asked whether, in view of the length of time that would probably be occupied in an inquiry into the extent, nature, and probable causes of the depression now or recently prevailing in various branches of agriculture, Her Majesty's Government would institute a separate inquiry into the incidence of Imperial and local taxation on agricultural land? He said, the House was aware that an inquiry was to be made into the present condition and circumstances of agriculture by a Committee of the other branch of the Legislature. As to its advisability he had nothing to say, as he did not wish to enter into controversial topics on the subject. An inquiry of so large a character, embracing as it must do so many matters of controversy, would necessarily occupy a considerable length of time. The Royal Commission presided over by the Duke of Richmond sat for about three years. Judging by the public papers the inquiry was to be "into the extent, nature, and probable causes of the depression now or recently prevailing in agriculture, with the object of recommending the adoption of any remedies that could be found." That would, of

course, embrace such questions as the alleged depreciation of gold, bi-metallism, the importation of food, and everything and anything that anybody might imagine to be a cause of depression. Therefore, it must take a very long time. One peculiarity in the case of Wales in regard to this subject was that, as far as could be judged, a consensus of opinion existed among all classes interested in agriculture that the burden on agricultural land, however fair it might at one time have been, had now become intolerable to the weakening shoulders of that depressed industry. Another peculiarity of this question was that an independent inquiry into the incidence of taxation upon agricultural land could not in any way interfere with an inquiry into the larger question as to the probable causes of the depression generally; and should the result of such an inquiry be to substantiate the alleged injustice of the present great burdens, and to lead to legislation, such legislation could not invalidate any larger legislation that might be recommended by the Committee of the other House. It would, therefore, be advisable that a separate inquiry should be made into this smaller and distinct branch of the whole subject, in order that Parliament might obtain reliable information upon it, and, if necessary, upon the Committee's Report, legislate within a reasonable time. The present condition of agriculture was very grave, and it was of the utmost importance that any legislation which could be devised to help that industry should be carried out without unnecessary delay. This inquiry must occupy a great many Sessions, and the Committee would, of course, have to be re-appointed many times, and he therefore hoped the Government would take the practical step of instituting a separate inquiry into the incidence of taxation and local burdens upon land.

**LORD RIBBLESDALE:** My Lords, I will at once say that this is a very reasonable proposal of my noble Friend's, and I can assure him that Her Majesty's Government have been fully alive to the considerations he has advanced as to the time which must elapse before the Committee can report. But the balance of argument appeared to the Government to be on the side of a single Committee. I take no exception to the sketch my noble

*Lord Herschell*

Friend has given of the powers of this single Committee. Its powers are to be full, both as to the order and the detail in which they take evidence upon the circumstances of the existing depression, and as to the propriety of the various remedies, be they legislative or administrative, which may be suggested in connection with the evidence they are able to collect. It appeared to the Government that if the course presumably preferred by my noble Friend had been adopted much work would have had to be done twice over, as the remedies the Committee are to discuss can only usefully be discussed side by side with the precise condition of agriculture at this present moment; and I think your Lordships will agree with me that this is especially the case when you are dealing with so sensitive a remedy as the transfer of burdens from one sort of property to another sort of property. Charges upon agricultural land which seem fair enough in good times seem very unfair in bad times. I should be the last man in your Lordships' House to demur from the proposition that the times just now are very bad; but in connection with the incidence of fair taxation it would be hazardous to define what is fair and what is unfair until exact *data* of the extent of agricultural depression are before us; and I do not see how an inquiry into the incidence of taxation of agricultural land would be useful or even possible without reliable information as to the fall in prices of agricultural products, the fall in rents, the loss of capital engaged, and so on. Indeed, it might be argued that a separate Committee, of the kind suggested by my noble Friend, on incidence of taxation would be as materially hampered by not having this information before them as a Committee of the kind the Government have appointed would be hampered in its discussion of remedies by not having before them the *data* of incidence of taxation, and not being able to take evidence upon this element in the case. The fact is, the two questions are so closely related that they can hardly be separated. My noble Friend was afraid that the inquiry must take a long time, but I do not think they will be dilatory. I admit there is a great deal of evidence to collect. At the same time the Committee are well aware of the gravity of the issues involved, and if grass is to

grow from their deliberations the horse must not be allowed to starve meanwhile. A great mass of information was collected by the Richmond Commission in 1879, to which my noble Friend has referred. That information will certainly not be overlooked by the Committee, and to bring that information up to date should not in the nature of things be so very stupendous a task or take the protracted period my noble Friend indicated. I said just now that the Reference of the Committee enabled them to take their subjects of inquiry in any order they pleased. The question of incidence of taxation is obviously certain to suggest itself to them, and, I may say, to be pressed upon their attention at the outset. Moreover, I conceive it will be quite within their competence to investigate it and report upon it separately, thus giving it a priority over the other matters which will occupy their labours. I hope I have said enough to justify the decision arrived at by the Government after a due consideration of all the surroundings of this important question, which, I repeat, is to leave the whole inquiry in the hands of a single Committee with free and wide powers.

#### VOLUNTARY CONVEYANCES BILL [H.L.]

A Bill to amend the law relating to the avoidance of voluntary conveyances—Was presented by the Lord Macnaghten; read 1<sup>st</sup>; and to be printed. (No. 20.)

House adjourned at five minutes before  
Five o'clock, to Thursday next,  
a quarter past Ten o'clock.

#### HOUSE OF COMMONS,

*Tuesday, 21st February 1893.*

The Speaker took the Chair at Three o'clock.

#### PRIVATE BUSINESS.

#### LIVERPOOL CORPORATION BILL.

#### SELECT COMMITTEE.

MR. FORWOOD (Lancashire, Ormskirk), in moving—



"That the Bill be referred to a Select Committee of Seven Members, Four to be nominated by the House, and Three by the Committee of Selection,"

said: Mr. Speaker, the subject on which I desire to invite the attention of the House is connected with a Private Bill, yet, as it affects the welfare of a population that exceeds 500,000, I am sure that it will receive every consideration at the hands of the House. If I am a little lengthy in my remarks I must claim the indulgence of the House; for as the Forms of the House do not allow me the right of reply, I must endeavour to anticipate any arguments that may be raised against the Motion which I now submit to the House. Sir, there is before the House at present a Bill promoted by the Liverpool Corporation which consists of three parts. The first deals with municipal government; and another part is of a more far-reaching extent, for it proposes to extend the time for the redemption of the debt of Liverpool to a period on the average of 20 years. By that extension of time for the redemption of the debt the present ratepayers would benefit in rates to the amount of £28,000 a year, which would be thrown on the ratepayers of the future. The 2nd clause of the Bill proposes an arrangement under which all the rates levied in Liverpool, for whatever purposes they may be required, will, after a certain date, be equalised. When the Municipal Act of 1835 was introduced the ward system was very properly a prominent proposal in that measure. The object of the ward system was, in a measure, to decentralise power—that is to say, whilst forming a Central Body for discussion, to have representatives for each part and district of the city. The importance of having a fair representation of each part and district of the city could not be gainsaid. The condition of the streets, the health of the people, the cleanliness of the district, the lighting arrangements, are all matters that appertain particularly to individual districts; and if the ratepayers of any district have a grievance, or have reason to complain of the want of attention shown to their district, it is of great advantage to them that they should have individual representatives to whom to go with their grievances, for they would have a better chance of having these

grievances redressed by bringing their case before the attention of individual representatives than before the collective attention of a large Central Body. The importance of the ward system could not, therefore, be exaggerated. I will take one illustration. In one district of Liverpool the death-rate is as low as 16 in 1,000 per annum, whilst in another it is 39 per 1,000. It is of the utmost importance to the health of the town that each district should be looked after by some person more particularly connected with the district, so that its condition may be brought distinctly to the attention of the Town Council. Then, again, the members of the Town Council have the expenditure of a common fund. It is their duty to attend to the wants of the whole city, and to distribute their expenditure out of the common rates of the city, in such a manner as shall be equitable to all districts alike. Now, for the sake of that equitable distribution, and for the sake of a proper attention to the health of the city, it is of the most essential importance that there should be an electoral distribution in the ward system of Liverpool. I will now, with the permission of the House, show the basis on which the City Council is formed to-day. In Liverpool there are 16 wards, each of which returns three Councillors to the Town Council. This division of the wards was made 58 years ago. At that time the population of Liverpool was only 234,000, but to-day it is 518,000. The number of electors 58 years ago was 6,000, but now they number 75,000—a change which has, to a great extent, been brought about by extension of the franchise. When the division of Liverpool was made in 1835, what is called the parish of Liverpool—which is the town proper—was divided into 12 wards. It contained an area of only 1,500 acres, the population being 180,000. The other portion of Liverpool—the outskirts—had then an area of 2,900 acres and a population of only 49,000. Therefore, when in 1885 the out-townships were divided into four wards, it was almost a mathematical division proportionate to the population of the townships and the population of the wards of the parish of Liverpool. A remarkable change has, however, taken place since then. I think the decline in the parish that has occurred is largely due to the fact that Liverpool

is the great centre for trade and railway enterprise, and that residences were taken down to make room for trade and railway extensions; and while the parish of Liverpool, with its 36 representatives, has in the 58 years diminished in population by nearly 30,000 people, the four out-townships, which only return 12 Councillors, has risen from 49,000 to no less than 360,000 people. So that we have to-day this curious anomaly: that two-thirds of the population of the city has only one-fourth of the total representation in the City Council. The 36 members who represent the wards within the parish of Liverpool have control over the expenditure and the spending departments, and naturally their inclination is to devote a larger proportion of that expenditure to the wards they represent than is just or right to the out-townships. Anyone who visits Liverpool will be struck with the brightness and the cleanliness and the good order of the streets in the central part of the town; but if he will go out to the heights of Everton, to the district of West Derby, or Toxteth, he would find the lamps few and far between and the scavenging operations not carried out with efficiency or in a satisfactory way. The reason is to be found in the want of sufficient representation of those districts, which really want the scavenging operations and the lighting more than the central districts. Now, Sir, Parliament has contemplated that these anomalies in connection with the division of our great Municipalities into wards will arise, and it has in its wisdom provided a means under which they can be rectified. That means is provided under the Municipal Corporations Act, but it requires that a full two-thirds of the entire Town Council should petition Her Majesty in Council for a Commissioner to be sent down to investigate the matter. Something like eight or nine attempts have been made since 1878 to induce 43 members of the Town Council of Liverpool to join in that Petition, but always without success. It is under these circumstances that I have to bring this matter before the House. In connection with the present Bill, I daresay Members of the House have received a Memorandum signed by the deputy town clerk of Liverpool explaining the reasons why the Motion

I have made should be rejected, and why the Bill should go on in its present shape. Of course, Members of the House are accustomed to receive these *ex parte* statements; but I venture to say that of all the *ex parte* statements it has been my lot to read, the present Memorandum is the most *ex parte*. Yet, with all that, the particulars which the deputy town clerk has furnished to the House clearly vindicate the action I have taken, because he points out that though attempts have been made to induce the Town Council to put in force the powers they possess they have not succeeded from one cause or another. When this Bill was submitted to the ratepayers in January the town's meeting was adjourned by a resolution requesting the Town Council to take steps to petition the Queen to remedy the scandalous position in which the wards are at present placed. That request was brought before the Town Council in January, but only 27 members, including the Mayor, attended, and one attended simply to say that his colleagues would not join in the Petition. The Petition was, therefore, only signed by 25 members, and it fell to the ground. A Petition has been lodged in the House signed by over 12,000 of the ratepayers of these aggrieved districts. They ask for justice to be done to every district, and this they submit cannot be done unless they have a fair representation in the Body which controls the expenditure of the rates to which they contribute so largely. Last year a Bill was introduced by a Member of the House which would have had the effect of modifying the requirement that two-thirds of the Council should petition Parliament, and would have given power to the ratepayers to put the machinery of that Bill into operation. That Bill was opposed by the hon. Member for the Scotland Division (Mr. T. P. O'Connor), and one of the grounds of his opposition was that as the Tories were in Office they would appoint the Boundary Commissioner, and that there was a risk of the boundaries of the new wards being "gerrymandered" to suit the wishes of the Tory Party. The circumstances have now completely changed. A Liberal Government is in power; the Commissioner would be appointed by them, and I do not share the anxiety displayed by the hon. Member

as regards my political opponents, for I believe that the Commissioner appointed to inquire into the matter would do his duty rightly and fairly and justly. Another Member objected to the Bill on the ground that in Liverpool all the Aldermen were of the Conservative Party, and that, therefore, they more than balanced the difference in the representation between one set of wards and the other. That, too, has been remedied, and the Aldermen are now equally divided between the two Parties. The hon. Member for the Exchange Division (Mr. R. Neville), in opposing the Bill, said it would be unwise to alter the general law to suit one particular case. I do not ask the House to alter the law, but simply to apply to a particular case the law now in force. The hon. Member for the Exchange Division of Liverpool, and another hon. Member — Dr. Commins—who is no longer a Member of this House, declared that a re-arrangement of the wards could not go alone without a redistribution of rating, or at any rate an equalisation of rating. My reply, if that objection is made to the Bill before the House now, is that in it provision is made for the equalisation of the rating. I come next to the Amendment of the hon. Member for the Scotland Division of Liverpool, who, I assume, to-day represents the Town Council so far as this Bill is concerned. That Amendment is in direct opposition to the Motion I am now about to submit to the House. He suggests that instead of adopting this plan we ought to proceed by a separate measure, or that the matter should be dealt with in the forms prescribed for such cases by the Municipal Corporations Act. I have this to say : that if the hon. Member will, on behalf of the Liverpool Town Council, undertake that they will put in force the clause of the Municipal Corporations Act which empowers an inquiry into the matter, I am satisfied, and will not proceed with the Motion of which I have given notice. I know that the House in its corporate capacity is rightfully attached to precedents, and has become more and more so, even while it has been growing more democratic and more independent, so far as individual Members are concerned. Now I have a precedent before me which is on all fours with the case I have now to submit. In 1887 the City of Belfast

*Mr. Forwood*

promoted a Main Drainage Bill in this House, and the hon. Member who then sat for the Western Division of the city (Mr. Sexton) proposed that there should be incorporated in it a clause for dealing with the franchise of Belfast as well as with the extension of its boundaries and an alteration of the wards. He pointed out that the ward distribution was made 50 years ago, and that the population had since quadrupled, and he asked the House to accept an Instruction which was mandatory to the Committee. I simply ask the House by my Motion to refer the matter to a Committee for consideration.

\*MR. SPEAKER: The right hon. Gentleman is now discussing his Instruction. It would be more regular, first, to decide the first paragraph which proposes its reference to a specially-constituted Committee.

MR. FORWOOD: Then, Mr. Mayor [*laughter*—like the President of the Local Government Board, I have been very much associated with municipal matters, and that is why this error has slipped from my lips—then, Mr. Speaker, I will move the first paragraph—

“That the Bill be referred to a Select Committee of Seven Members, Four to be nominated by the House and Three by the Committee of Selection.”

I would say this : I do not wish to interfere with the regular course of this Bill. When I put down this Motion the Police and Sanitary Committee had not been set up, but I should be quite satisfied if the Bill goes to that Committee. Shall I be in Order in amending my proposal by moving that it be sent to the Police and Sanitary Committee ?

\*MR. SPEAKER: The right hon. Gentleman must give notice of that Motion.

MR. FORWOOD: Would it be open for me to proceed with the Instruction without reference to any Committee ?

\*MR. SPEAKER: If the right hon. Gentleman likes he may withdraw the first part of his Motion.

MR. FORWOOD: Then I ask leave to withdraw the first part of my Motion, and to move the rest as an Instruction to the Committee in charge of the Bill.

Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That the Bill be referred to a Select Committee of Seven Members, Four to be nominated by the House, and Three by the Committee of Selection."—(*Mr. Forwood.*)

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

MR. FORWOOD: Now, Sir, I beg to move the second paragraph of the Motion—

"That it be an Instruction to the Committee on the Liverpool Corporation Bill to consider and report to the House whether in their opinion the existing division of the City of Liverpool into wards affords to the Ratepayers a fair and equitable representation, with power to the Committee to make provision for a re-arrangement, if they deem the same inequitable."

I was—when interrupted on the point of Order—justifying my action in bringing forward this proposal for an Instruction by a reference to the course of procedure adopted in regard to the Belfast Main Drainage Bill. When that Bill was under consideration in this House the then Member for West Belfast argued that the wealthy districts of the city were over-represented, and that money was lavished on the richer districts, while the poorer districts were unrepresented and neglected. I am endeavouring to show that the same argument is applicable to Liverpool. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for the Bodmin Division of Cornwall, who was then Chairman of Committees in this House, objected to proceeding by means of such an Instruction on the ground that it was sought to alter the general law by a Private Bill, and also to extend the borough of Belfast (it was then a borough and not a city) by embracing within it adjoining districts which had not consented to such a union, and consent for which is required from them by Parliament whenever a borough seeks to change its boundaries. The hon. Member for the Scotland Division of Liverpool on that occasion supported the proposal of the hon. Member for West Belfast, while the Chairman of Committees moved the Previous Question, which was carried. The progress of the Bill was, however, closely watched by one of the ablest Parliamentary hands, by a Member of apparently never-tiring energy. I am referring to the hon. Member who at the time represented West Belfast, and he on the Third Reading proposed and carried a

clause which added to the Drainage Bill provisions altering the franchise and increasing the electorate from 6,000 to no less than 35,000. That proposal was, in the first instance, objected to by the right hon. Gentleman who now fills the office of Chief Secretary for Ireland; and Sir James Corry, who was then a Member of the House, offered to assent to the postponement of the Bill if the Government would undertake to do all they could to promote the passing of a Municipal Franchise Bill. As a fact, the consideration of the Bill was postponed; but on the resumption of the Debate the clause altering the franchise was carried by 128 votes to 98 votes, among the Ayes being the present President of the Local Government Board, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, the Home Secretary, and the Attorney General, the Member for the Exchange Division of Liverpool, and other supporters of the present Government. Clearly we have here a case on all fours with the matter which I have ventured to bring before the House. The proposal then carried was to alter the law as regards the franchise in a particular town. I only ask the House to-day to instruct its Committee to inquire if there is sufficient reason for calling upon the Liverpool City Council to put in force permissive powers with which Parliament has endowed it, and to take steps to remedy a great injustice by which a large proportion of the people of Liverpool are greatly and grossly misrepresented. The result of the action with regard to the Belfast Bill was that the clause was ultimately taken out of the Bill, and the Government of the day undertook to push forward a Bill altering the franchise in Ireland. That Bill became law when the clause had been eliminated, and the wishes of those who desired to alter the franchise were satisfied by a separate Act. If the hon. Member for the Scotland Division will undertake that the Liverpool Town Council will of its own volition take steps to have the evil which I have pointed out remedied, or if the right hon. Gentleman the President of the Local Government Board will adopt with regard to Liverpool that action which the right hon. Gentleman the present Chief Secretary for Ireland took with regard to the Belfast Main Drainage Bill and promise Government support to the measure which

has been introduced by the hon. Member for South Islington, I shall be willing to withdraw my Motion altogether. I thank the House for the considerate attention it has given to what has proved a dry, and it may be uninteresting, subject, and I beg to move the Instruction which stands in my name.

Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That it be an Instruction to the Committee on the Liverpool Corporation Bill to consider and report to the House whether in their opinion the existing division of the City of Liverpool into wards affords to the Ratepayers a fair and equitable representation, with power to the Committee to make provision for a re-arrangement if they deem the same inequitable."

—(*Mr. Forwood.*)

**MR. NEVILLE** (Liverpool, Exchange): On a point of Order, Sir, I wish to know whether the result of the right hon. Gentleman's action is not to send this Bill to a Private Committee in the ordinary course, and whether, therefore, his Instruction is in Order?

**\*MR. SPEAKER:** If the Bill goes before the Police and Sanitary Committee the Instruction is in Order.

**MR. T. P. O'CONNOR** (Liverpool, Scotland): The right hon. Gentleman in moving his Instruction has not spoken in any way in a partisan spirit, and I propose, in asking the House to reject his Motion, to speak in exactly the same spirit. I am not altogether hopeless that I shall succeed in inducing hon. Members on the Opposition side of the House to see the undesirability of adopting the right hon. Gentleman's proposal. I cannot accept some of the statements of the right hon. Gentleman. The law of the country provides certain methods for doing that which he proposes; as he has said, any Corporation in the country has a right by a vote of two-thirds of its members to petition the Queen for a Commission to deal with the question of changing the areas of wards. When he asks me to pledge the Liberal majority in the City Council to take certain action he invites me to give a pledge which not even that majority would be entitled to give, because the law safeguards the rights of ratepayers in these matters in a most direct manner, and insists that they, as well as the Council, shall assent to any proposal of this nature before Parliament can sanction it. It would, therefore, be an impertinence on my part to make any

statement until the ratepayers of Liverpool had been consulted according to the prescribed form. I cannot accept the statement of the right hon. Gentleman that it was impossible to alter these wards before. Forty-three constitute two-thirds of the entire City Council, and for several years the Party to which the right hon. Gentleman belongs had at least as many as 43 representatives on the Corporation; indeed, at one period, I believe their total was as high as 49. For at least 10 years the Liberal members of the Council implored the right hon. Gentleman and his friends to consider this matter; but they implored in vain. Now in the days of his weakness the right hon. Gentleman wants us to consider and take up a matter which in the days of his strength he refused to deal with. I think we must look with suspicion on any proposal which seeks to go behind the back of the City Council and to get the Imperial Parliament to do work which the Corporation ought itself to do. This very Bill is the creation of a Motion of the right hon. Gentleman himself; but although that Motion deals with various corporate duties of great importance, it contains not a single syllable about a change in the wards. If the right hon. Gentleman intended to raise this question, he ought surely to have raised it in the Municipal Corporation itself, especially as, at that time, the right hon. Gentleman was a most prominent and powerful member of that Body, and he and his friends were in a majority in the Corporation. He could, therefore, have secured the necessary majority for its adoption. Why, the Conservatives themselves by their own action showed how little importance they attached to the question; for when a Motion in regard to it was put forward, they did not attend the Council meeting in sufficient numbers to form a quorum. The Bill is a most important one. I do not think that the right hon. Gentleman, who is responsible for many of its provisions, will deny that it is urgently required in the interests of Liverpool; but does the right hon. Gentleman think that, if the present Motion is carried, the Bill will have the slightest chance of passing into law this Session? The fact is, the adoption of this Instruction means the indefinite postponement of urgent and necessary

*Mr. Forwood*

reforms in the city. The ward system in Liverpool is, no doubt, open to reform, but this is not the time or method for carrying out that reform. The majority in the last Parliament did exactly what I am now asking this Parliament to do—namely, to abstain from effecting, by a private measure, what really belongs to a Public Bill. Some wards in Liverpool may, perhaps, be over-represented, while others are under-represented; but the fact remains, that all sections of the population—Conservatives, Liberals, and Irish—possess a representation upon the City Council. That was not the case in Belfast. There the Catholics, although numbering between one-fourth and one-third of the entire population, were without a single representative upon the Corporation of that city. I cannot imagine anything more ruinous to the interests of any community than a system of constant change, accompanied, as it almost certainly will be, by continual gerrymandering, and, therefore, I think we ought to maintain the existing safeguards in regard to changes in ward areas. As to the principle of the Bill of the hon. Member for South Islington, I shall be happy to consider it when it comes before the House. Until that comes before us, or until the Government see their way to propose some modification in the present system, I submit it is undesirable to make an exception in the case of one city. As I understand my Amendment is not in Order, I shall simply ask the House to reject the right hon. Gentleman's Instruction.

MR. NEVILLE: My hon. Friend has put the case so plainly that I need not occupy many minutes in stating why I think the proposal of the right hon. Gentleman should not be accepted by the House. I cannot myself see how the right hon. Gentleman could have had any reasonable hope of effecting a redistribution of the wards in Liverpool by the course which he has adopted. The almost inevitable result would have been to sacrifice the Bill, which has been read a second time by this House. That Bill was initiated by the Finance Committee in the year 1892, when the Party of the right hon. Gentleman was in a majority on the Corporation, and it received the unanimous assent of the Committee, both Liberals and Conservatives joining in approving it. It went before the Council,

where also it was unanimously approved, at two special meetings convened in accordance with the provisions of the Borough Funds Act. Under the provisions of the same Act two meetings of the ratepayers were held, and at each of those resolutions were unanimously carried in favour of the promotion of the measure, and that not without having before their minds the question which the right hon. Gentleman has endeavoured to raise now, but after a discussion and adjournment of the meeting in order that the Council might consider whether the provisions for the alterations of the boundary might properly be introduced in the present Bill. And it does seem to be asking a great deal too much to ask the House to interfere with a practically unanimous decision of the Council in Liverpool and the unanimous decision of the Liverpool ratepayers. Let me point out to the House what seems to me would be the result of adopting the right hon. Gentleman's Instruction. Parliamentary notices having been given in this House, except so far as it is freed from its obligations by this House, outside these Parliamentary notices the Corporation cannot go in promoting their Bill. No instructions were given to include in these Parliamentary notices questions relating to the redistribution of these wards, and the result would be that any attempt to introduce alterations now must inevitably be fatal to the Bill. Suppose the House thought it worth while to interfere with the ordinary course of the Committee in regard to this Instruction, what will be the fate of this Bill when it comes before the other House? And the same objection will meet it in Committee. Then it will be pointed out that it will be contrary to the Standing Orders that the Instruction proposed should be introduced; and the result will inevitably be that even if the proposal of the right hon. Gentleman were not fatal to the passing of this Bill, it would, at any rate, be quite fatal to any possibility of its becoming law during this Session. That alone is a good ground why we should ask hon. Members in this House not to interfere with the decision of the Liverpool Corporation. Surely we have sufficient work to do in this House without being called upon, upon the initiative of a Member who does not even represent a division of the city which makes

the proposal—upon the initiative of an outside Member—to go into a re-consideration of the question whether or no the Corporation has acted properly in promoting the Bill in the form before the House or whether it would not be better for the Corporation to have undertaken some additional labours besides those the result of which appears in the Bill? Why should the Liverpool Corporation be placed on a different footing to any other Corporation? If this House once admits the principle that it is part of their proper duty to investigate and interfere with the administration of its business in the ordinary way by a Municipal Corporation, why then we should increase the business of the House—which we already find too heavy—fivefold, and it would become absolutely impossible to get through it. I ask hon. Members to consider what it really is we are asked to do, and to ask themselves whether it would be wise to take the step suggested by the right hon. Gentleman, in view of the fact already pointed out, that the general law provides means by which a redistribution of wards can be attained. It is suggested that these means are not available in the present instance. What I would point out is this: The existing state of the divisions has lasted upwards of 50 years—I believe for 58 years. Until last November, I think during the whole of that time, the Party to which the right hon. Gentleman belongs were in power in Liverpool. Year after year, month after month, they had, if they pleased, for years the opportunity of introducing these reforms; and now when, for the first time for nearly 60 years, the Liberal Party is in power, this House is asked to depart from its usual course, and to interfere with the administration of business in Liverpool, when, if they had chosen to do so in the days of their own power, the Party of the right hon. Gentleman might easily have attained what they are now pressing forward. I am not going into the merits of the question as to whether the change should be made, but I say no case has been made out to this House which would warrant hon. Members in departing from the reasonable and just course of leaving Municipal Corporations to manage their own affairs, and not interfering with the unanimous decision of

*Mr. Neville*

both Parties. I hope the House will not be misled by the right hon. Gentleman, but will see that, in truth, the course he is pursuing is an obstructive policy—a policy which cannot effect the purposes which it professes to aim at, but which, if the right hon. Gentleman persuades the House to adopt it, would be destructive of the very necessary reform proposed by this Corporation.

\***MR. LONG** (Liverpool, West Derby): I do not propose to trespass for more than a moment, but I want to call the attention of the House to the fact that the Member for the Scotland Division of Liverpool fell into an error when he told the House, presumably speaking on behalf of the Corporation of Liverpool, that he was unable to give the assurance my right hon. Friend asked him for, behind the Council and the ratepayers of the city. What I want to point out is this: It has been said that the Town Council have the power, if they desire, to effect this change in the redistribution of power in the wards, by the adoption of a resolution to present a Petition by a two-thirds majority in the Council, and on confirmation by a meeting of ratepayers. That confirmation is required solely for the payment of expenses for the promotion of a Private Bill, and does not arise in connection with the Amendment moved by my right hon. Friend.

**MR. T. P. O'CONNOR**: What I meant to convey in my observations was that this particular Bill had been brought before the House after adoption by the City Council and adoption by a meeting of the ratepayers, and that it would be going behind the ratepayers and superimposing on this Bill matter as to which there had been no consultation.

**MR. LONG**: That is another matter. I understood the hon. Gentleman to say that it was impossible for the Town Council to proceed without confirmation by the ratepayers. The hon. Gentleman is probably not aware of the fact that my right hon. Friend was compelled practically to adopt the line he has adopted to-day, because at the meeting to which the hon. Member refers he pledged himself to bring forward this Motion in the House, and to press its adoption by this House. The Member for the Exchange Division has told us that if this Amendment were carried this Bill must be lost. Why must it be lost? We were told it

would be a hardship upon the Corporation of Liverpool, and those who are opposed to these proposals, that they should be called upon without due notice to go into this question of redistribution. I would call attention to the fact that all that is asked by the Amendment is that a Commissioner should inquire whether there are good grounds for this redistribution, and, if so, to take such steps as might be necessary. All the views entertained on the question could, if an inquiry were held, be submitted before the Commissioner appointed by the Government.

MR. NEVILLE : I thought I had explained why it would be fatal. The Parliamentary notices could not sustain this matter; and, according to the Standing Orders of the House of Lords, that must be fatal to the Bill when it went there.

MR. LONG : I suppose it would be necessary to suspend the Standing Orders in the House of Lords to obtain the necessary scope. Does the hon. Gentleman say the House of Lords would not suspend the Standing Orders ?

MR. NEVILLE : I suppose the House of Lords can conduct their own business. We cannot prevent it.

MR. LONG : If this House saw fit to introduce a change of this kind on the grounds of public advantage brought forward by hon. Gentlemen in this House in all probability a similar course would be followed in the House of Lords. If this change were desirable, not on grounds of public policy but on grounds of advantage to the city itself, I imagine the House of Lords would enter no objection. It has been said there is no ground for the change, and taunts, hardly worthy of hon. Gentlemen, have been flung at my right hon. Friend, who has been asked, "Why did you not do this when you were in the Council" ? I am informed that the Corporation of Liverpool was only for a short period in a position to have secured this two-thirds majority when the Conservative Party held the majority in the Council, and at that time it was the intention of the majority in the Corporation, if they had proceeded in this matter, to include in it an extension of the boundaries, and it was only because they desired to make the change a complete one that this particular step was not taken. Nobody desired that this Bill should be lost ; but what was

desired was that the representation, either Parliamentary or municipal, should be equal and fair. The present state of things in the City of Liverpool is neither equal nor fair, and nobody will deny that a change ought to be effected. We are told that this is not the way to proceed in the matter ; but the only other method is by the promotion of a Private Bill, and it is not likely that anybody will again undertake the risk and expenditure of doing that. Then there is the obtaining of a two-thirds majority of the Council, but it is unlikely the Council will reduce its majority and effect the change itself ; and I think my right hon. Friend, in the interests of those he represents in the Corporation and the House, was bound to bring this Amendment forward in order that the House of Commons might itself have an opportunity of expressing the opinion whether or not they thought this redistribution of wards should be made.

MR. HERBERT GLADSTONE (Leeds, W.) : The right hon. Gentleman who has just sat down has told the House that the right hon. Gentleman who has moved this Instruction has brought it forward because he was compelled to do so in consequence of a pledge given by him in Liverpool. He did not tell us why he gave the pledge, or why he gave that pledge on his own responsibility. The right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Forwood) has endeavoured to bring in the case of the Belfast Main Drainage Bill as a precedent in favour of his action on the present occasion. But there is a great distinction between the two cases. I do not suppose that he himself would argue that the state of things in the Municipality of Belfast is parallel to the state of things in the Municipality of Liverpool. There were grave grounds of public policy to warrant even unusual steps on the part of this House to govern Belfast. In Belfast there was a large Roman Catholic minority, and they had not got one single member on the Town Council. That is a startling condition of things, which would justify this House in any action which might be taken to remedy the grievance. [MR. SEXTON : And it was done by a Public Bill.] There is no such ground for interference in the present case. The right hon. Gentleman will not tell us that he has any complaint with regard to the representation of



Parties in Liverpool. For 50 years there was a large Tory majority on the Corporation, and no change was made, whilst the change is proposed now that the Liberals have only just been returned. It is pretty clear to the House that the state of Parties in Liverpool in local affairs is almost on a balance, and that there is no reason for interfering. The right hon. Gentleman says that the statement by the town clerk or deputy town clerk of Liverpool was an *ex parte* statement. We may, however, take it that such a statement is published by the deputy town clerk as the representative of the Corporation which he serves, and in that statement he has brought the views of the Corporation before the House. The right hon. Gentleman tells us there are 12,000 ratepayers who signed the Petition in favour of the Instruction, but he did not tell us anything about the 63,000 who did not sign it. I cannot imagine any new circumstances that have arisen since last September to make us pass this Instruction. Previously when there was a Conservative majority in the Corporation, they did not move in this direction; and even when the notices were lodged in conformity with the Borough Funds Act, no reference whatsoever was made to the proposal now before the House, and the Corporation of Liverpool naturally resent the loading of their Bill with an Instruction which is perfectly alien to their purpose, and which is not desired by the majority of the Corporation and the citizens. The Member for West Derby (Mr. Long) said no other course was open to the Mover of this Instruction than the one he had pursued. The hon. Gentleman omitted the case of the Bill brought in by the Member for South Islington (Sir A. Rollit)—the Municipal Corporations Act Amendment Bill. That Bill stands in this position. It has advanced a stage, and has received the support of my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary. And my hon. Friend mentioned that Bill as an alternative method of proceeding. As far as I can see, no adequate reason whatsoever has been urged in support of the Instruction moved by the right hon. Gentleman, and I sincerely hope the House will reject it. I might point out that if this change were desired, Liverpool stands in an especially favourable position with regard to this

matter, because it had a local Bill passed in 1885, according to which a Petition might be presented for altering the boundaries. The step the right hon. Gentleman is now taking is a very curious step; and seeing that his Party have been in a majority in Liverpool for a period of 50 years without proceeding in this direction, I hope the Instruction will be rejected. If you carry this Instruction, it may, in the first place, sacrifice the Bill; in the second place, there is no ground of public policy for interfering with a municipal matter; in the third place, it is not alleged there is any inequality of Parties in Liverpool which requires interference; in the fourth place, the question can be better dealt with in connection with the Bill brought in by the Member for South Islington; and, in the fifth place, we should deal with questions of this kind in a Public Bill, and not in a Private Bill by means of an Instruction.

SIR GEORGE BADEN-POWELL (Liverpool, Kirkdale): The hon. Gentleman who has just sat down has shown he is friendly disposed to the Municipal Corporations Act Amendment Bill, and I hope his example of friendliness towards that Bill will be followed by other hon. Gentlemen on that Bench. At the same time, I should like to deprecate in the strongest language the appeals which have been made by hon. Gentlemen to Party politics either in this House or in Liverpool.

MR. T. P. O'CONNOR: I made no such appeal.

MR. H. GLADSTONE: It was because I said there was no Party feeling in Liverpool in this matter that I asked the House to reject the Instruction.

SIR GEORGE BADEN-POWELL: What I alluded to were the observations as to the Conservative Party being in power all these years, and yet never introducing a Bill. I think myself that any project for providing a fair and equitable representation in the Municipal Council of Liverpool and for doing justice to the people is a matter which ought to be settled before any new arrangements are made in regard to the finances of Liverpool. My right hon. Friend, at the meeting to which allusion was made, distinctly made the pledge as to bringing on this Instruction, otherwise the Bill itself would not have been ap-

*Mr. Herbert Gladstone.*

proved by that meeting. It has been found impossible to obtain the two-thirds majority of the Council so as to proceed in that way, and it is necessary to secure an equitable representation by the means we now ask this House to adopt. I happen to represent a district which is little less than one-half of one municipal division. In that municipal division there are 24,000 electors, who elect three members to the Municipal Council, whereas in another there are only 700.

\*THE CHAIRMAN OF WAYS AND MEANS (Mr. MELLOR, York, W.R., Sowerby): It is no part of my duty to express any opinion whatever on the merits of this scheme, but I wish, under present circumstances, to call the attention of the House to the nature of the precedent it is sought to establish. It seems to me it would be an unfortunate course to take; the course which is generally taken is plain. If a Private Bill or a Local Bill is about to be promoted by a Corporation or persons, they give certain notices at a particular time and set down all the provisions of the Bill. If the course now suggested be taken, it will be perfectly possible for anybody to give notice for one Bill, say a small Bill, and then without giving Parliamentary notice, and going behind the Standing Orders of the House, to come down to the House with Instructions of this sort and seek to engraft upon the Bill a very much more important scheme, which the ratepayers have not had the advantage of considering, and which a Corporation would find themselves in considerable difficulty in dealing with by reason of the Borough Funds Bill. What ought to be done? The law has provided a remedy for this state of things. That law is provided by the Municipal Corporations Act. The proper course to pursue for those who wish to make alterations of this kind is to get the Corporation to assent and petition by a two-thirds majority. Objection has been raised by the right hon. Gentleman who moved the Resolution that it will be difficult or impossible to get that number. But if that be so, surely the remedy is not to proceed by an Instruction of this kind. The true remedy is either to get the Corporation, by persuasion or representation, to change their mind and petition in favour of this scheme, or do as one of the speakers has suggested—

amend the Municipal Corporation Bill. I should be disposed to think that if it is impossible to get a Corporation to do either what they ought to do, or many people think they ought to do, that then the true course is to seek for a remedy not in a Private Bill such as this, but by endeavouring to get an amendment in the Municipal Corporation Bill. With regard to the precedent of Belfast, I have to say it seems that the right hon. Member for Bodmin (Mr. Courtney), who moved the Previous Question, thought it undesirable to establish such a precedent. The House on that occasion, I understand, absolutely declined to accept the Instruction or to establish a precedent, because they thought that it was undesirable to go behind the Standing Orders of the House. That being so, there seems to be no real reason for the course suggested, which I think undesirable, and I shall feel it my duty to oppose this Instruction.

MR. FORWOOD: In view of the benevolent attitude which the Under Secretary to the Home Office has taken with regard to the Bill before the House for the amendment of the Municipal Corporation Act, I will ask the House for leave to withdraw my Instruction.

MR. T. M. HEALY: The hon. Member for Leeds was in error in stating that the Municipal Corporation Bill had been read a second time. It would have been but for the Leader of the Opposition, who blocked it, not knowing whose Bill it was, and a second time it was blocked by the hon. Baronet the Member for Wigton (Sir Herbert Maxwell). I would suggest to the Tory Party that after 12 o'clock at night they should wake up a little so as to see what they are blocking.

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

#### SELECTION (STANDING COMMITTEES) (CHAIRMEN'S PANEL).

SIR JOHN MOWBRAY reported from the Committee of Selection; That they had selected the following Six Members to be the Chairmen's Panel and to serve as Chairmen of the two Standing Committees to be appointed under Standing Order 49:—Sir John Gorst, Sir Henry James, Sir G. Osborné

Morgan, Mr. Arthur O'Connor, Sir Matthew White Ridley, and Mr. Stansfeld.

Report to lie upon the Table.

### QUESTIONS.

#### THE PRICES OF CORN AND BREAD.

MR. JEFFREYS (Hants, Basingstoke): In the absence of my hon. Friend the Member for Central Sheffield, I beg to ask the President of the Board of Agriculture if his attention has been called to the fact that in the week ending 7th January, 1893, the official average price of wheat was 25s. 10d. per quarter, or 10s. 4d. (about 30 per cent.) lower than in the corresponding week of 1892; and whether the information at his disposal enables him to state whether there was any, and, if so, what, corresponding fall in the retail price of bread in either London, Sheffield, Liverpool, Glasgow, Bristol, or Dublin?

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF AGRICULTURE (MR. GARDNER, Essex, Saffron Walden): The hon. Member states quite correctly that the official average price of British wheat per quarter in the first week of the present year was 10s. 4d. lower than in the corresponding week of 1892. No official statistics are available with regard to the retail price of bread in the towns named in the question, but from the information I have received I should conclude that there has been a general fall in that price, although not everywhere, and for all qualities of bread in the same proportion as in the case of British wheat. I need not, however, point out to the hon. Member that the price of British wheat at the market at which it is sold is not the only factor which determines the retail price of bread. I am to-day informed by Messrs. Barker and Co., Kensington—a large firm—that their price this morning for the finest wheaten bread is 5½d. per four-pound loaf delivered. They state that inferior qualities are sold as low, in some instances, as 3½d., 4d., and 4½d. at the shop; not an uncommon price.

*Sir John Mowbray*

#### DONADEA PETTY SESSIONS.

MR. KENNEDY (Kildare, N.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland if he will state the number of regular Petty Sessions of the Donadea district, County Kildare, which failed to be held owing to the non-attendance of magistrates within the past 12 months; whether he is aware that great inconvenience has been caused to the public, especially licensed traders, during the month of October, by this non-attendance; whether he will state the names of the magistrates of the district, with the attendance of each during the above period; and whether he will take steps to prevent this injustice to the public?

\*THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (MR. J. MORLEY, Newcastle-upon-Tyne): I am informed that the holding of Petty Sessions in this district lapsed on two occasions only, for the reason stated, during the past 12 months, and that the public was not much inconvenienced in consequence. With regard to licensed traders, it is to be observed that they do not, as a rule, attend the Sessions personally, but send their Papers as to the renewal of their licences to the clerk for signature, who retains them till a Court is formed. It would be unusual to give the information asked for in the third paragraph of question.

MR. KENNEDY: May I ask the right hon. Gentleman if he has received any complaints from gentlemen resident in the locality?

MR. J. MORLEY: I cannot recall any at this moment.

#### THE THIRSK RAILWAY ACCIDENT.

MR. JOHN ELLIS (Nottingham, Rushcliffe): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he has called the attention of the North-Eastern Railway Company to the suggestions in the Report of Major Marindin upon the railway accident near Thirsk on 2nd November 1892, in which he points out the danger of the practice, in force on the North-Eastern and some other railways, of allowing signalmen to offer the "Be ready" signal before they have received the "Out of section" or "Line clear" signal from the cabin in advance, and also expresses his opinion that the

attention of the North-Eastern Railway Company should be directed to the question of relief signalmen; and what reply has been given by the Railway Company on the subject?

\*THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE (Mr. MUNDELLA, Sheffield, Brightside): Yes, Sir; I did call the attention of the North-Eastern Railway Company to the points referred to by the hon. Member. With reference to the suggestion that a signalman should not be allowed to offer the "Be ready" signal for a second train until he has received from the cabin in advance the "Out of section" or "Line clear" signal for the preceding train, the Company state that no change can properly be made without conference amongst the various large companies whose regulations are identical. The question as to whether any alteration in the existing regulations should be made is to be considered at a special meeting of the Superintendents of the various Railway Companies to be held early in March. With regard to the question of relief signalmen, I am informed that the company have at present a staff of 52 spare relief signalmen, and the directors have recently sanctioned the appointment of 18 additional men for spare relief duty.

#### SAVING LIFE AT SEA.

MR. GOURLEY (Sunderland): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade how much of the £20,000 voted last Session for erecting telegraph and telephone wires between coastguard and lifeboat stations, shore lighthouses, and rocket stations has already been expended; and whether the system has been the means of accelerating the despatch of lifeboats to crews in distress, and of saving several lives; if so, is it his intention to ask Parliament for a further grant sufficient to carry out the recommendations contained in the interim Report of the Commissioners on Coast Communication?

THE POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. A. MORLEY, Nottingham, E.): My right hon. Friend has asked me to answer this question. As I have already stated to the House, the sum of £20,000 voted last Session for Special Sea Coast Extensions has been wholly appropriated, and will be expended before the end of

the financial year. I have no information, beyond what is to be found in the public newspapers, as to whether the system has been the means of accelerating the despatch of lifeboats and of saving lives; and I have communicated with my right hon. Friend the President of the Board of Trade, and I understand that he is in the same position. The latter part of my hon. Friend's question refers to certain proposals of the Royal Commission on Electrical Communication with Lighthouses and Lightvessels. Those proposals, which are distinct from the scheme of Sea Coast Extensions sanctioned by Parliament, are now under the consideration of the Treasury.

#### THE NEW YORK NAVAL DEMONSTRATION.

MR. GOURLEY: I beg to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty if it is true that the Italian Government intend instructing the Commanders of the Squadron of Men of War, which are to take part in the forthcoming International Naval Demonstration at New York, to pay a complimentary visit to Plymouth and Devonport, in return for those visits recently made by the British Mediterranean Squadron to some of the Italian ports; if so, is it the intention of the Admiralty to provide similar arrangements to those accorded to the officers and men of the French Fleet when they visited Portsmouth in 1865 and 1891; and will he also state what complimentary arrangements are contemplated on the part of the Government with regard to the class and number of vessels by which Great Britain is to be represented at the forthcoming United States International Naval Fête?

THE SECRETARY TO THE ADMIRALTY (Sir U. KAY-SHUTTLEWORTH, Lancashire, Clitheroe): Information has reached Her Majesty's Government that the Italian Government do not propose to send a Squadron to this country. In answer to my hon. Friend's second question, I have to inform the House that the Commander-in-Chief on the North American Station will attend the Review with some of the ships of his Squadron, and that the question whether any additional ships will be sent out is under consideration at the Admiralty.

## LONDON GOVERNMENT.

**MR. BENN** (Tower Hamlets, St. George's): I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board if Her Majesty's Government propose to take any steps to bring about the amalgamation of the City of London with the area which is now known as the administrative county of London?

\***THE PRESIDENT OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD** (Mr. H. H. FOWLER, Wolverhampton, E.): Her Majesty's Government have come to the conclusion that the administration of London must be considered imperfect and anomalous until arrangements have been made for including the City in the general system of the Metropolis. They, therefore, feel it to be their duty to lose no time in accelerating that necessary reform. But they are not insensible to the little prospect that the state of public business holds out of their being able to carry an adequate measure of this kind during the present Session, and also to the many difficulties of detail with which this question is encompassed. They have, therefore, determined to issue a small Royal Commission to consider the proper conditions under which the proposed amalgamation can be effected and to make specific and practical propositions for that purpose. With that object they would propose that the Commission should consist of five Members, one to represent the City, one the London County Council, two others to be persons well versed in the municipal government of our great cities, and a Chairman of business capacity and impartiality.

**MR. JOHNSTON** (Belfast, S.): Will Mr. Justice Mathew be the Chairman?

[No answer was given.]

## STEAM TRAWLING ON THE SCOTCH COAST.

**MR. BEITH** (Inverness, &c.): I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland, in view of the greatly extended area on the coast of Scotland from which steam trawling is prohibited by the Scotch Fishery Board, and also in view of the inadequate provision at the disposal of the Fishery Board for enforcing this prohibition, what steps, if any, are being taken to procure from the Treasury the requisite funds to place upon the prohibited waters an

effective police to secure that the mandate of the Fishery Board be respected?

**THE SECRETARY FOR SCOTLAND** (Sir G. TREVELYAN, Glasgow, Bridgeton): The usual custom hitherto has been for two vessels to patrol the East Coast of Scotland in the summer season and one in the winter season. If that proves from experience to be inadequate, more protection must be applied for.

## TRADES UNIONISTS AND GOVERNMENT CONTRACTS.

**MR. CLANCY** (Dublin Co., N.): On behalf of the hon. Member for Dublin, St. Patrick's, I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether he has satisfied himself that the Governmental contractor for the National Museum now in course of erection in Dublin is paying Trades Union wages and keeping Trades Union hands, as intended by the Fair Wages Resolution of the House of Commons in respect to Government contracts?

**THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY** (Sir J. T. HIBBERT, Oldham): I am informed by the Board of Works that no complaint has reached them with reference to the wages paid by the contractor for the works at present in progress at the Dublin Museum of Science and Art, nor have the Board any reason to think that the terms of the Resolution of 13th February, 1891, are not being complied with.

## BALTIMORE PIER.

**MR. CLANCY**: I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether the Government intend to erect a new pier at Baltimore, in accordance with the designs of the late Father Davis, and if the railway will be connected with it; and when it may be expected that the railway will be finished?

**SIR J. T. HIBBERT**: As I stated yesterday, there are no funds available for erecting a new pier, or for extending the railway, and the Treasury is not prepared to undertake either work. It is expected that the railway will be available for fish traffic in time for the opening of the fishery season at the end of March.

RAILWAY UNPUNCTUALITY IN  
LONDON.

MR. BARROW (Southwark, Bermondsey): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he can state the number of trains run daily between Charing Cross and London Bridge Stations, and *vice versa*, by the South Eastern Railway Company during the months of November, December, and January last, showing the number of those that were late in arriving and the average loss of time per late train; and whether any effective steps can be taken in the interest of the public to ensure a greater degree of punctuality?

MR. MUNDELLA: I have communicated the question of the hon. Member to the Company, and they have sent in a Return for the month of November, 1892, the details of which cannot conveniently be summarised in a reply to a question. The Company state that a staff of clerks have been continuously employed (including Sunday) to prepare this Return, and that those for December and January will be sent in as soon as possible. I shall be happy to show the hon. Member the complete Returns when received.

MR. BARROW: Will the right hon. Gentleman answer the last part of the question, irrespective of the Return?

MR. MUNDELLA: I should like to see the Return first, and to hear the Company's explanation. There are certain circumstances which must be taken into consideration, and one is that the traffic coming into London over the Eastern Company's system has to pass, as it were, through the neck of a bottle. Then during the three months referred to by the hon. Member fogs occur, and will naturally account for some delay.

## KINSALE HARBOUR DUES.

MR. MORROGH (Cork Co., S.E.): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether he has received a copy of a resolution passed by the Kinsale Harbour Commissioners, in reference to the collection of harbour dues in that port; and whether, in view of the heavy debt due by the Harbour Commissioners, and the consequent necessity for economy, the Treasury will allow the collection to remain in the hands of the present collec-

tor, thereby saving the commission payable to a Receiver?

SIR J. T. HIBBERT: The hon. Member has been kind enough to show me a copy of the resolution referred to. I may explain that the Court of Chancery have appointed a new Receiver in place of the former Receiver, deceased, and the Treasury has no power to alter the decision of the Court. I am informed, however, that the Harbour Commissioners will have notice of the consideration of the Court of the proposed measures of economy, and it will be open to them to submit to the Court any suggestions they may consider expedient in the interests of the harbour and for the discharge of its liabilities.

## THE TROOPS IN EGYPT.

MR. BROOKFIELD (Sussex, Rye): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War if he can conveniently state with how many different patterns of rifle the combined British and Egyptian force in Egypt is at present armed?

\*THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN, Stirling, &c.): Of the Egyptian troops a small portion have Remingtons, the remainder Martini-Henrys. The British troops have Lee-Netfords and Martini-Henrys.

THE ULSTER TENANT-FARMERS'  
ASSOCIATION

MR. T. W. RUSSELL (Tyrone, S.): In the absence of my hon. Friend the Member for South Londonderry, I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland if his attention has been called to the resolutions passed at a large public conference of the Ulster Tenant-Farmers' Association held at Belfast on the 10th instant; and whether he will take any steps with regard to any of the points named in those resolutions?

\*MR. J. MORLEY: My attention has been drawn to the resolutions referred to, and I can only say that, in common with many others of more or less similar purport, they will receive the consideration of the Irish Government.

MR. T. M. HEALY (Louth, N.): Arising out of this question, may I inquire whether the right hon. Gentleman is aware of a Bill having the same object as the resolution, brought in by the Member

for one of the Divisions of Fermanagh, is blocked night after night by the hon. and learned Member for South Antrim?

**MR. CLANCY:** And has the hon. Member for South Tyrone any reason for supposing that a Bill dealing with this matter will pass the House of Lords?

**MR. T. W. RUSSELL:** The question is not mine.

[No answer was given.]

#### THE CASE OF WILLIAM CHUTE.

**CAPTAIN DONELAN (Cork, E.):** I beg to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty whether, in view of the recommendations of the coroner's jury in the case of William Chute, who lost his life while in Government employment at Haulbowline Docks on the 9th instant, the Department will take into their kind consideration the helpless and destitute condition of his widow and five orphan children?

**THE CIVIL LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY (MR. EDMUND ROBERTSON, Dundee):** The necessary steps will be taken to represent the case to the Treasury, the award of compensation resting with that Department.

#### ARMY RECRUITING IN 1892.

**COLONEL MURRAY (Bath):** I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War if he can conveniently state the number of recruits who were enlisted for the Army in 1892, and the percentage of special enlistments?

**\*MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN:** The hon. and gallant Member will find full details as to the Recruiting of the past year in the Report of the Inspector General of Recruiting, which will very shortly be presented to Parliament.

#### CIVIL POSTS FOR DISCHARGED SOLDIERS.

**COLONEL MURRAY:** I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War how many Civil posts under Government became vacant during 1892, which might, in the terms of the Report of the Committee of 1876-7 on this subject, be suitably filled by discharged soldiers; and how many of these posts were so filled?

**\*MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN:** I am afraid I can only reply in so far as concerns the War Office, where 13 such vacancies occurred and were filled during 1892.

*Mr. T. M. Healy*

#### CYPRUS-FED BEEF.

**MR. WEIR (Ross and Cromarty):** I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether he is aware that Cyprus-fed beef has, during the last few years, greatly improved in quality, and is not only superior to, but much less expensive than, the Russian beef at present supplied to the troops in the Island, Cyprus-fed beef being at the present time exported to supply the British troops in Egypt; and whether future tenders for the supply of rations to the troops in Cyprus will be such as to include Cyprus-fed beef?

**\*MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN:** The Reports from the General Officer commanding do not bear out the statements contained in the question. The force in Egypt is supplied with live cattle from local sources as well as from Russia.

#### CROWN SALMON FISHERIES IN SCOTLAND.

**MR. WEIR:** I beg to ask the First Commissioner of Works whether, having regard to the importance of the fishing industry in Scotland, the proposed scheme for dealing with Crown Salmon Fisheries in Scotland, which has been under the consideration of the Department for the last two years, will be formulated without further delay?

**SIR J. T. HIBBERT:** Will my hon. Friend allow me to say that I am in communication with the Secretary for Scotland upon this matter, and I trust that the question will shortly reach a stage at which an announcement can be made.

#### MEDICAL AID FOR POOR CROFTERS.

**MR. WEIR:** I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland whether it is the duty of the Board of Supervision, without waiting for complaints, to require Parochial Boards to provide medical assistance for the pauper class in remote townships in the Lewis and other parts of the Highlands and Islands of Scotland; and, if so, will the Scottish Office use its power to compel that Department to exercise proper vigilance in caring for the pauper class, and protecting the health of the population in country districts?

**SIR G. TREVELYAN :** It is the duty of Parochial Boards to provide medical attendance for the pauper class. There is a Government grant of £20,000 in aid of this pauper medical attendance, and in order to participate in this grant the Board of Supervision require each parish to appoint a salaried medical officer, whose duties are clearly laid down. The parishes of the Lewis are thus supplied. No complaint has been received for some years from the Lewis of insufficient medical attendance. Of course if it is found necessary to increase the number of medical officers in the Lewis, the cost must fall on the parishes concerned, which are already, as the hon. Member must be aware, very heavily burdened.

**IRISH GOVERNMENT CONTRACTS.**

**MR. CLANCY (for Mr. FIELD) :** I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether the Board of Works and other Government contracts for painting in Ireland were only given to firms employing Trades Union labour according to the Resolution of the House ?

**SIR J. T. HIBBERT :** I am not aware whether the firms holding Government contracts for painting in Ireland employ Trade Union labour, but I must point out that the Resolution of the House of the 13th February, 1891, does not prescribe such a condition. Compliance with the terms of that Resolution is already being provided for by the Board of Works in all their contracts.

**THE NATIONAL FLAG AT WESTMINSTER.**

**MR. ARNOLD-FORSTER (Belfast, W.) :** I beg to ask the First Commissioner of Works whether there is any statutory or other obstacle which prevents the display of the National Flag upon the National Parliament House ; and whether, in case any such obstacle exists, he will take steps for its removal, and by displaying the National Flag upon the National Parliament House will conform to the practice of every civilized country in the world with the exception of the United Kingdom ?

**THE FIRST COMMISSIONER OF WORKS (Mr. SHAW LEFEVRE, Bradford, Central) :** The question raised by the hon. Member was mooted in the last Parliament two years ago. In reply to the question on the subject my pre-

decessor, the right hon. Member for the University of Dublin, whose devotion to the Union and the flag is so well known, treated the subject with the gravity it deserved. He said that he had no power in the matter, and referred the questioner to the functionary known as the Lord Great Chamberlain, who alone has authority on such a subject. I cannot give any better answer to the hon. Member.

**MR. ARNOLD-FORSTER :** Is there any obstacle, statutory or otherwise, to prevent the display of the flag ?

**MR. SHAW LEFEVRE :** I am not aware of any.

**MR. MAC NEILL (Donegal, S.) :** Yes, common sense.

**POLICE PROTECTION AT NIGHT SEIZURES.**

**MR. CARSON (Dublin University) :** I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether, in the case of "*The Attorney General v. Kinsane*," before the Court of Queen's Bench in Ireland had given judgment upon the motion for attachment against the police officer for illegally refusing to give police protection, he had given directions to appeal from said judgment when given : and whether, in view of the fact that the Court of Appeal unanimously decided that no such appeal lay, and that the point was conclusively decided by the case of "*O'Shea v. O'Shea*" in this country, he will state whether this case was known to the Irish Executive before instituting this appeal ; and whether the Irish Executive will be compelled to pay all the costs on both sides of the proceedings in the Queen's Bench and Court of Appeal, and out of what funds or Votes such costs will be defrayed ?

**\*MR. J. MORLEY :** Directions to appeal were given before the judgment of the Queen's Bench was pronounced. We shared the view, afterwards expressed by the Lord Chief Baron and Lord Justice Barry in the Court of Appeal, that some mode should be devised of obtaining a judicial decision of the House of Lords in a matter—as the Lord Chief Baron truly said—in the highest degree worthy of the consideration of that tribunal. The case of "*O'Shea v. O'Shea*" was known, but it was not anticipated by the legal adviser of the Irish Government that the facts would be held to be on all fours. The costs of the proceed-



ings will be defrayed by the Government out of the Vote for Law Charges.

**MR. T. M. HEALY :** Has the hon. and learned Member who put the question availed himself of the opportunity of seeing at the Irish Office a list of these illegal seizures ?

**MR. J. MORLEY :** That hardly arises out of the question, but I may say the hon. and learned Gentleman has applied to see the list. It is, however, not yet completed.

#### THE CIRENCESTER ELECTION.

**MR. FREDERICK FRYE** (Kensington, N.): I beg to ask the Solicitor General whether his attention has been directed to the fact that at the last Cirencester election several votes were lost in consequence of the neglect by the presiding officer or his subordinates to place the official mark on some of the Ballot papers ; and whether, seeing that there is no penalty for such omission provided in the Statute governing the conduct of elections, the Government propose to take any action in the matter ?

**THE SOLICITOR GENERAL** (Sir J. RIGBY, Forfar) : If a clerk appointed by a Returning Officer took upon himself the duty of delivering the voting papers he would not be a subordinate of the presiding officer, and would not thus be relieved of responsibility. The question is whether, as there is no penalty for an omission to place the official mark on Ballot papers, the Government propose to take any action in the matter ? I believe it is accurate to say that there is no penalty, but it has been decided by a Court of Law that an action would be against a presiding officer or his clerk in the event of their not fulfilling the duty, and under the circumstances the Government do not propose to introduce any legislation on the matter.

#### ARMY DISCHARGES.

**MR. EDWARD H. BAYLEY** (Camberwell, N.) : I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether, in view of the proposed modification of the regulation as to repayment of discharge-money when a soldier re-enlists, he will in the meantime exercise the power he possesses to suspend the regulation in the case of Susan Bennett, to enable her to receive a portion of the money she paid ?

*Mr. J. Morley*

**\*MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN :** I fear I can only refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave yesterday. I have no power under the Royal Warrant to sanction any refund of money, paid for discharge, on re-enlistment.

#### RAILWAY RATES FOR IRISH MACKEREL.

**MR. A. C. MORTON** (Peterborough) : I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he is aware that the Great Western Railway Company are charging 57s. 6d. per ton from New Milford to London for Irish mackerel and herrings, the rate charged for the same fish from New Milford to Liverpool (about the same distance) being only 30s. per ton ; and will he represent to the Railway Company that such rates exclude large supplies of fresh fish from London, and injure the Irish fishermen ?

**MR. MUNDELLA :** Yes, Sir ; the facts are as stated in the hon. Member's question. The Railway Company contend—(1) that the rate to London is a reasonable one in itself, as is proved by the fact that it has stood the test of many years' experience, and has developed a large traffic ; (2) that the rate to Liverpool is influenced by sea competition from the Fishing Grounds to the Ports of Holyhead, Liverpool, and Fleetwood ; and (3) that the arrangement is in the interest of the buyers at Milford, who are enabled to distribute the fish landed there wherever there is a suitable market.

**MR. P. J. POWER** (Waterford, E.) : Is it not a fact that instead of developing the Irish fishing industry in the county of Waterford the Company are retarding it in every possible way. Is not that the local feeling ?

**MR. MUNDELLA :** I am not aware what the local opinion is.

#### AYR PRISON.

**MR. BIRKMYRE** (Ayr, &c.) : I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland whether the chaplain to be appointed for Ayr Prison must necessarily be a licentiate of the Established Church of Scotland ; and, if so, whether he will take steps to make the appointment open to licentiates of other churches ?

**SIR G. TREVELYAN :** The chaplain for a Scotch prison must, under Statute, be a minister of the Church of

Scotland. The Government are opposed on principle to this restriction. Its removal is a question of time as far as they are concerned.

#### THE L. AND N. W. COMPANY'S MILK RATES.

MR. COBB (Warwick, S.E., Rugby) : I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether, since the deputation waited upon him on 15th February, the London and North Western Company have reverted to the old rates upon milk traffic between competitive stations ?

MR. MUNDELLA : No, Sir ; I have received no further communication from the Company in question on the subject. I have, however, asked the London and North Western the question, and will communicate the answer to my hon. Friend as soon as it is received.

SIR J. WHITEHEAD (Leicester) : Have the Railway Companies expressed their acquiescence in the conditions on which the President of the Board of Trade has stated his willingness to extend in favour of Railway Companies the time for the revision of their new rates ? May I also ask whether, in the absence of such acquiescence, the Government will, in view of the urgent public importance of the question, give an early day for the discussion of the matters at issue ?

MR. MUNDELLA : I have a statement on this subject to make presently.

#### STATION NOMENCLATURE.

MR. JACKS (Stirlingshire) : I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade if his attention has been called to the inconvenience caused to the public by large advertisements being exhibited in railway stations ; and if he will take steps to have the name of the station made more prominent than these advertisements ?

MR. MUNDELLA : Every railway passenger must have felt the inconvenience to which my hon. Friend refers, although no general representation has been made to me on the subject. It is, however, one of the new requirements of the Board of Trade as regards new railways that names of stations are to be shown conspicuously on boards and on platform lamps, and recommendation to the same effect will be made to all railways on the next opportunity.

#### THE RAILWAY COMPANIES AND THE BOARD OF TRADE.

SIR BERNHARD SAMUELSON (Oxfordshire, Banbury) : I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether any further communications have reached him from the Railway Companies on the subject of Rates since that from Sir H. Oakley, which he read to the House on the 7th of this month ?

SIR MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH (Bristol, W.) : On the same subject, will the right hon. Gentleman say if the Railway Companies have made any statement to the Board of Trade as to the date within which they will bring into effect the revision of the rates in favour of the traders ? Have they been requested to name any time ?

MR. MUNDELLA : I have to-day seen Sir H. Oakley, and received from him a list, which I hold in my hand, of articles in respect of which the rates set out in the rate books on the 1st January have been reduced, showing the class rate to be made applicable to them for the future. The list is too long to read, but it comprises many important articles of merchandise, and I shall be happy to lay it on the Table. Sir H. Oakley assures me the reductions cover several millions of rates, and that the Companies are engaged every day revising and reducing their rates. They did name the 28th February as the date for the completion of the revision, but I find there is no prospect of completing it, and Sir Henry Oakley now tells me that even with a large staff working as fast as possible the revision will hardly be finished before the middle of April. He assures me that the Companies are most anxious to arrive at a settlement, and as far as they possibly can to meet the reasonable wishes of the traders. I do not wish to say anything just at present as to what course the Government may be prepared to take, but when the revision is complete the Government will consider whether there remains any just grounds of complaint against the companies, and, if there does, what is the proper remedy to apply ?

SIR B. SAMUELSON : Arising out of the answer, may I ask whether the right hon. Gentleman will undertake to compare the revised rates, when issued, with the rates previously in force, in

order that the House may judge the extent to which the Companies have complied with the wishes of the traders ?

MR. MUNDELLA : The number of rates is so enormous that the task would take a long time, but I will from time to time endeavour to have a comparison made between the old and the new rates in order to ascertain the extent of the reduction.

SIR J. WHITEHEAD : Has the right hon. Gentleman acquiesced in the proposal to extend the time to the middle of April ; if so, upon what terms ? From when will the revision date ?

MR. MUNDELLA : The Companies have agreed that the altered rates shall date back to the 1st January. That is the only term agreed upon. I have made no other condition.

MR. T. M. HEALY : Does the Railway Association speak for the Irish Companies, and will the rebate be allowed by them ?

MR. MUNDELLA : The Railway Association represents the Irish as well as the English Railways, and they promise that the same conditions shall apply to both.

MR. COBB : Will the House be supplied from time to time with the revised rates, or will hon. Members have to wait till April for the Report ?

MR. MUNDELLA : It is most necessary that before the rate book is published the whole of the rates shall be revised ; but I will endeavour to give to the House some indication of the changes contemplated.

SIR R. PAGET (Somerset, Wells) : Is Sir Henry Oakley speaking only for his own Company, or for all the companies ?

MR. MUNDELLA : Sir Henry Oakley speaks for the Railway Association, and therefore on behalf of all the Railway Companies.

MR. A. C. MORTON : And the revised rates are to date back ?

MR. MUNDELLA : Yes ; to the 1st January.

#### THE PAMIRS.

MR. GIBSON BOWLES (Lynn Regis) : I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether Her Majesty's Government have been informed that in the spring of last year an Afghan force attacked and drove out

from Somatash, in the Alichur Pamir, a Chinese force, then in occupation of that place ; whether the Afghans subsequently carried off the Kirghiz chiefs of Barzilla Jai and Bash Gumbaz, together with several families of the inhabitants ; whether any demand for an explanation of these acts has been addressed by the Chinese Government to Her Majesty's Government as representing the Ameer of Afghanistan ; and whether such demand has been entertained by Her Majesty's Government ; and, if so, what explanation has been afforded ?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Sir E. GREY, Northumberland, Berwick) : As regards the first point, it is generally correct that an occurrence of the kind stated took place. As regards the second, all knowledge of it is denied by the Ameer, who has asked for further particulars of the alleged incident. With regard to both, communications of the most friendly nature have passed between Her Majesty's Government and that of China.

MR. GIBSON BOWLES : That scarcely answers my question. Have the Chinese Government demanded explanation ?

SIR E. GREY : I said that communications of the most friendly nature had passed. The matter was referred to the Ameer, who replied that he had no knowledge of the facts, and asked for further particulars.

MR. GIBSON BOWLES : But has any demand for explanations been made by the Chinese Government ?

SIR E. GREY : I stated that the Chinese Government had made representations.

MR. GIBSON BOWLES : Demanding explanation ?

SIR E. GREY : Yes ; and the matter has been referred to the Ameer.

#### THE CONVICT DALY.

MR. JOHN REDMOND (Waterford) : I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether the Government are aware of the name of the man who handed the parcel of explosives to John Daly immediately before his arrest ; whether this man was in the pay of the police ; whether he disappeared from Liverpool immediately after Daly's arrest ; and whether the

*Sir B. Samuelson*

Government knows his present whereabouts?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. ASQUITH, Fife, E.): The question of the hon. Member is one which, with all respect to him, I must, in accordance with uniform practice, and in the public interest, decline to answer. My refusal to do so rests upon grounds of general policy, and will not justify any inference as to what, if I were able to answer, my answer in this particular case would be.

MR. W. REDMOND (Clare, E.): May I ask whether the right hon. Gentleman's refusal to answer is based on a knowledge of facts in his possession which, if the question were answered, would make out a case for Daly's release?

[No answer was given.]

MR. W. REDMOND: As the right hon. Gentleman is not sufficiently courageous to answer my question, I give him notice that it will be brought forward again and again until the right hon. Gentleman changes the cold-blooded attitude which he has adopted.

\*MR. SPEAKER: Order, order!

#### ALIEN IMMIGRATION.

MR. JAMES LOWTHER (Kent, Thauet): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he is now in a position to state the names of the Commissioners to be sent to the United States for the purpose of inquiring into the question of Alien Immigration; and whether he will lay upon the Table of the House the text of the instructions given to the Commissioners?

MR. MUNDELLA: The names of the Commissioners are Mr. John Burnett, Chief Labour Correspondent, and Mr. D. Schloss, Barrister-at-Law, and a well-known writer on Labour questions. The instructions shall be laid on the Table of the House, if desired.

MR. JAMES LOWTHER: Might I ask the right hon. Gentleman whether it is the fact that both gentlemen referred to are permanent Government officials, subordinates in the Department of which the Chief is Mr. Giffen, whose opinions on these topics are well known; whether, as far as Mr. Schloss is concerned, he is not a gentleman of alien extraction who

is known to entertain decided views; and whether the right hon. Gentleman can give any precedent for the appointment of a Commission nominated under such conditions, except the Commission presided over by Mr. Justice Mathew?

MR. MUNDELLA: I do not understand the reference of the right hon. Gentleman to Mr. Giffen. I am at present the head of the Labour Department, and I am responsible for the selection of these two gentlemen, and not Mr. Giffen. Any one who knows Mr. Burnett must realise his independence and impartiality in all these questions, and his bias, if he has any, tends to be against alien immigration. Mr. Schloss is a man of such knowledge and ability that we have decided to use his services in this and other inquiries. The right hon. Gentlemen asks whether Mr. Schloss is an alien.

MR. JAMES LOWTHER: I did not. I asked whether he was a gentleman of alien extraction.

MR. MUNDELLA: Perhaps the right hon. Gentleman thinks I am a gentleman of alien extraction. I believe that Mr. Schloss is English born. He belongs to the Jewish community; he is a man of remarkable ability, and a very proper man for the employment. I hope we have not come to this—that we may not employ any man unless he bears an English name.

MR. JAMES LOWTHER: On going into Committee of Supply I shall call attention to these appointments.

MR. MUNDELLA: I must remind the right hon. Gentleman that there are hon. Gentlemen sitting beside him on that Bench who are of "alien extraction."

#### SUPERANNUATION OF SCHOOL TEACHERS IN SCOTLAND.

DR. MACGREGOR (Inverness-shire): I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland whether the Government propose to legislate at an early date in favour of the superannuation of teachers in the public schools of Scotland?

THE SECRETARY FOR SCOTLAND (Sir G. TREVELYAN, Glasgow, Bridgeton): The question is to be brought before the House on Friday next, and I have no doubt that the views of the Government will be then stated.

## DISTRESS IN THE HIGHLANDS.

**DR. MACGREGOR:** I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland whether, considering the great distress now prevailing in many parts of the Highlands and Islands of Scotland, the Government will, this Session, so amend the law relating to the salmon fisheries as to allow to the people the use and benefit of at least a portion of this natural food supply?

**SIR G. TREVELYAN:** The Fisheries Bill which the Government are very soon going to introduce does not relate to salmon fisheries but to the general sea fisheries of Scotland. When that question has been disposed of, the Government will consider the large question of salmon legislation.

**DR. MACGREGOR:** This Session?

**SIR G. TREVELYAN:** It is impossible to say, Sir.

**DR. MACGREGOR:** Then I would ask the right hon. Gentleman how he thinks these people are to avoid becoming paupers? They are willing to work, but cannot get work to do—

**MR. SPEAKER:** Order, order!

## TELEGRAPH MESSENGERS AND NAVAL AND MILITARY SERVICE.

**MR. SNAPE** (Lancashire, S.E., Heywood): I beg to ask the Postmaster General whether the late Postmaster General issued an Order that all telegraph messengers should, at the age of 16, leave the Service and join the Army or Navy; whether, at present, the boys are being compelled to sign an agreement that they will conform to this Order; and whether he will give instructions that it be rescinded?

**THE POSTMASTER GENERAL** (Mr. ARNOLD MORLEY, Nottingham, E.): I would inform my hon. Friend that a question dealing with this subject stands on the Notice Paper for Friday, the 24th of February, in the name of the hon. Baronet the Member for the Barnard Castle Division of Durham (Sir J. Pease). I would ask my hon. Friend to allow me to postpone a detailed answer until that day; but I may say that there is no Order that all telegraphic messengers should at the age of 16 leave the Service and join the Army or Navy.

## INDIAN CURRENCY COMMITTEE.

**MR. CHAPLIN** (Lincolnshire, Sleaford): I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if the deliberations of the Committee upon Indian Currency are completed; whether the Report of that Committee can be laid upon the Table before the 28th of February; and when the Motion relating to the Monetary Conference at Brussels will be considered in this House?

**\*THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EX-CHEQUER** (Sir W. HARCOURT, Derby): The Committee upon Indian Currency are, I am informed, considering their Report, which has not yet been presented to the Secretary of State for India. I am not, therefore, in a position to give an answer as to when it will be laid on the Table; but I am informed that it will probably not be presented before the 28th of February.

## EVICTED TENANTS COMMISSION.

**MR. WILLIAM O'BRIEN** (Cork): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether the Report of the Evicted Tenants Commission has yet been presented; and, if so, when copies will be distributed?

**\*MR. J. MORLEY:** The Report has not yet been submitted to the Lord Lieutenant. I understand that it is very shortly expected.

## AGRICULTURAL DEPRESSION.

**MR. CHANNING** (Northampton, E.): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Agriculture whether, if any further information is necessary as to the nature and extent and probable causes of the agricultural depression, he will consider the advisability of obtaining this information by local inquiries, under the direction of the Board, similar to the local inquiries made under the Richmond Commission?

**THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF AGRICULTURE** (Mr. H. GARDNER, Essex, Saffron Walden): I think that it will be better to leave to the Committee the means by which the information they require may best be obtained. Any assistance the Committee may desire the Department to render, either in the direction indicated in the question or otherwise, we shall, of course, supply to the best of our power.

### NEGLECTANCE OF RETURNING OFFICERS.

**MR. FARQUHARSON** (Dorset, W.) : I beg to ask the Attorney General whether candidates whose elections have been invalidated by the carelessness or ignorance of the Returning Officer or his subordinates can legally obtain redress from the Returning Officer ?

**THE SOLICITOR GENERAL** (Mr. RIGBY, Forfar) : I will endeavour, in the absence of the Attorney General, to answer the question substantially, although, from the nature of it, I could not do otherwise than mislead if I attempted to give a categorical answer. The best information I can give to the hon. Member is that in regard to all the officials acting under the Ballot Act you must first determine whether they are acting in a ministerial or a judicial capacity. That must depend upon the particular circumstances of each case. If it is established that the official act. in a ministerial capacity he is open to an action on the part of any candidate who can show that, by any omission on the official's part, he has lost the election. If he acts in a judicial capacity you must further show that he was acting wilfully and knowingly against his duty. In regard to subordinates, each case must be governed by the particular circumstances.

**MR. P. J. POWER** (Waterford, E.) : I wish to ask whether the hon. and learned Gentleman is aware of the fact that, at Liberal meetings in connection with elections in England, the habit prevails in many rural districts of omitting to put a vote of confidence whether this custom has been found necessary owing to the boycotting and intimidation of the parsons in England ; and, also, whether no such custom prevails in Ireland whether the priests are against the candidate or not ?

\***MR. SPEAKER** : A question of that nature must be put on the Paper.

### ABSENCE OF MR. GLADSTONE.

**MR. FARQUHARSON** : I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether, in the event of the Government of Ireland Bill becoming Law, the Irish farmers will be allowed to grow tobacco ?

\***SIR W. HARCOURT** : With reference to this and other questions which are put down for the First Lord of the Treasury, he has desired me to say that as he is this afternoon in attendance on Her Majesty, and not able to be in the House, he requests the questions to be postponed. He will make a statement on Thursday next with reference to the conduct of business.

### NEW MEMBER SWORN.

Miles MacInnes, Esq., for the County of Northumberland (Hexham Division).

### MOTIONS.

#### MERCHANT SHIPPING ACT (1854) AMENDMENT BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Neville, Bill to amend "The Merchant Shipping Act, 1854," ordered to be brought in by Mr. Neville and Mr. Willox. Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 218.]

#### MINING ACCIDENTS INSURANCE (SCOTLAND) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Baird, Bill to provide for a system of National Insurance against Accidents in Mines in Scotland, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Baird, Mr. Hozier, Mr. Parker Smith, and Mr. Cochrane.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 219.]

#### MARRIED WOMEN'S DISABILITIES REMOVAL BILL.

On Motion of Dr. Clark, Bill to amend the Law relating to the Voting of Married Women at Local Elections, ordered to be brought in by Dr. Clark, Mr. Jacob Bright, Sir Algernon Borthwick, and Mr. Justin M'Carthy.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 220.]

#### REPRESENTATION OF CONSTITUENCIES DISPARITIES.—RESOLUTION.

\***MR. KIMBER** (Wandsworth) said that, in accordance with notice, he desired to call attention to the disparity of representation existing between certain constituencies of the United Kingdom, and to move—

"That there exist serious disparities in the representation in Parliament of the people of the United Kingdom; that these disparities are of such a nature and extent as to involve the danger of the will of the nation being misrepresented and possibly controverted by the decisions of the House of Commons, as at present constituted; and that therefore such disparities should forthwith be examined into by an impartial Committee or Commission, and remedied."

The arrangements from which the House derived its existence, and by which the people of the nation were represented in it, must always be matters of the first interest and importance both to Members and constituents, and when the machinery by which the people obtained the representation appeared to be imperfect it became the duty of every Member of the House to call attention to the subject. If that machinery got out of order, with the result that the will of the nation was wrongly expressed by the determination of the House, the House would be in the position not only of violating the first principle on which it was created, but of doing great wrong to millions of the people. The population of the country was now 38,000,000. The electors were, in round numbers, 6,200,000, and the Members of the House were 670. That gave an average of about 56,000 persons and 9,200 electors to each Member. "The government of the people by the people" was a phrase by which modern democracies loved to define their system of government. While admitting that the phrase was a good one, he submitted that it required the addition of three more words—namely, "for the people." Majorities had to legislate in the interest of minorities as well as in their own interest. The Prime Minister said the other night that a self-governed people was a people governed by majorities. For the purposes of argument he admitted that this was so, but as regarded the logical accuracy of the statement, he begged leave to differ. To be self-governed was not the same thing as to be governed by a majority of ourselves, nor could he admit that we at present governed ourselves by a majority of ourselves. The Members of the House no doubt represented the majorities of all the constituencies, but the decisions of the House were given, not by the will of the Members representing those majorities,

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but only by the will of a majority of them. The correct description, therefore, of the present system was "government of ourselves by a majority of representatives of the majority of the people," and this might of course be really a minority. Under the present system the minorities in the constituencies were supposed to be represented in opinion and political creed by the representatives of other constituencies. The minorities in the constituencies were represented by the accident that although they could not secure the man of their choice to represent them directly other people in other constituencies were of their opinion and sent men to represent them. There was much, therefore, to be said on the question of whether self-government meant government by majorities, and whether the position of this country was one of Government by a majority of the people. In a sense it certainly was, but not necessarily was the majority of representatives who decided on questions same in opinion as the majority of the people who sent them to Parliament. Every one admitted that it was highly important and essential that minorities should be represented. On looking through the Debates on all the great Reform Bills that had been passed in this century he did not find that there had been any resolute attempt on the part of any statesman representing either of the two great Parties to grapple with the question of the true representation, directly, of minorities. Proposals had been made on several occasions for the representation of minorities. They had had the three-cornered system with the cumulative vote proposed, and the cumulative vote system with two Members, and lastly they had had the scheme of the right hon. Gentlemen the Members for the University of London and Liskeard, formulated and discussed in 1884 at the time of the last Reform Bill. This question, though important, was a difficult one to deal with. Still, intelligent people ought to be able to grapple with the settlement. Assuming that the present system of representation by majorities was the correct one, it was all the more important, seeing that minorities were not represented, that the majorities should be accurately represented in the House. If population was to be taken as the

basis it was manifestly inequitable if not outrageous that one man should represent the figure 1 and another the figure 6 as the ratio of voting power among the constituencies. Yet such was the fact. Anomalies of that kind and even of a worse kind existed. Anomalies and imperfections existed in all human institutions. He did not lay blame to any one, for the changes which had occurred during the past eight years—since the last Reform Act—had been sufficient to account for many of the discrepancies. But it was right that he should give the House some specimens of the existing anomalies. First as to the average population that each Member was supposed to represent—speaking approximately, because it was impossible for the average to be always the same. So far from the average number of 56,000 having one representative, there were 55 Members in the House who represented over 80,000 people, and there were 18 Members who represented less than 20,000. The numbers ranged from 132,163—represented by the hon. Member for Cardiff—to 13,300, represented by the hon. Member for Kilkenny. As to the electors so far from the average 9,200 per Member obtaining there were 52 Members representing over 13,000 and 17 Members representing less than 3,000. They ranged from a maximum of 16,800 in the case of Cardiff town to 1,639 in the case of Kilkenny. There were four at least of the constituencies—namely, Cardiff, Handsworth, Bootle, and Wandsworth, who had more electors than the whole population of Kilkenny put together, and had more than the whole of Newry, Galway, and several other constituencies. There were many boroughs, like Stockport, Cork and Devonport, each with 10,000 electors or less, which returned two Members, whilst many others, such as Sunderland, Oldham, Portsmouth and Newcastle, had over 20,000—one of them as many as 30,000 electors—and only returned two Members. And there were many places, such as Bath and Devonport, which returned two Members with less than half the population of Cardiff which only returned one Member. There were 12 constituencies returning two Members, each containing a less number of voters than several other constituencies which returned one only. Antrim County re-

turned four Members, with a population of 205,000, against Kerry with four Members and only a population of 179,000. Antrim had 36,700 electors, and Kerry had 20,000 electors. The constituency he represented was just double the average of 56,318 population—namely, 113,000 with 15,000 electors, increased on the last register by 500. As compared with that and some other English constituencies there were five Irish constituencies which had only a population of 104,000 altogether and 12,600 electors. Wandsworth had only one Member, whilst these places had five, and possessed 9,000 more people and 2,300 more electors than the whole five. These five constituencies were Galway Town, with a population of 16,942, Kilkenny 13,323, Newry 13,605, Derry 32,893, and Waterford 27,623. Handsworth or Cardiff could throw South Kerry into the scale in addition to the other five constituencies—making a total electorate of 16,383—without counterbalancing their electoral strength. There was another source of error, for which nobody was to blame, but to which it was the duty of Members of Parliament to devote attention, especially the leaders of Parties and those who happened for the time to be in power—namely, the unequal increases which inevitably went on in constituencies and which ought to be watched, with the view of preventing people from being misrepresented. For instance, the Walthamstow Division of Essex had risen in one year by 1,359—from 15,323 to 16,682. Wandsworth had risen since he first entered Parliament as its Member from 10,500 to 15,500. The total increase over the country between the General Election of 1886 and that of 1892 under the same suffrage amounted to no less than 457,000. Obviously it was important, in order to get a due representation even of majorities in the House, that it should be the duty of Parliament to ascertain in what constituencies this increased number of people went and how they were represented. With such anomalies as he had pointed out it became of great importance to consider what was the value of a vote? The right hon. Gentleman the Prime Minister the other night in bringing in the Home Rule Bill agreed, practically, as to the value of the vote. The right hon. Gentleman placed great



stress on the 80 votes which Ireland should possess in the Imperial Parliament, therefore, it was to be presumed that he would attach due weight to what ought to be the value of each individual vote. How did the case stand in the discrepancies he had referred to in the House? Take some of the constituencies which contained double the average number of people. As representing Wands-worth he should have two votes out of the 670. If 56,000 people gave a right to one vote, obviously twice that number should give a right to two Members or two votes. Conversely, Galway Town, with 17,000 inhabitants, was entitled to only one-third of a vote; Kilkenny, with 13,000 people, one-fourth; Newry, with a population of 13,000, one-fourth; Derry, with 32,000, half a vote; and Waterford, with a population of 27,000, half a vote. The five Irish constituencies should be entitled, according to their population, if the principle was to be representation by numbers, only to two votes, and he should be entitled to two votes. That would make a difference on a Division of 10 votes in his favour, as against them, whereas by the present unequal representation they had 10 votes against him which they ought not to have. He might take it as admitted that so far as a constituency had more than the average 36,000 population it obviously had less than its real amount of voting power and, conversely, that so far as a constituency had less than the average population it had more voting power than it was entitled to. The Prime Minister had said the other night as a reason for giving full voting power to Irish Members in the future Imperial Parliament that if they did not—

“You break a great Parliamentary tradition—namely, that of the absolute equality of Members of this House.”

Where was the equality now in the cases he (Mr. Kimber) had cited? Was not the right hon. Gentleman now attempting to legislate with an inequality of Members. Was it not absolutely mathematically demonstrable that that was the process by which he was attempting to carry the Bill in which he admitted the principle—which, however, was not to be adopted until after the Bill passed—that every Member should be made

equal. The right hon. Gentleman proposed that Members from the Sister Island should be made equal; but it was not proposed to similarly remove the anomalies that he (Mr. Kimber) had pointed out. Instances might be multiplied almost without number of the anomalies now existing in each of the four different parts of the United Kingdom. But the most serious part of the business, and the most serious discrepancies yet remained to be shown—most serious because of the nature of the question now being debated by the Representative Assembly of the people of the United Kingdom—and those were the discrepancies as between the four parts of the United Kingdom. The great questions which had absorbed the attention, not only of the public, but also of Members of the House during the last seven years, had been questions in which the nationality system, so called, had been raised. Questions of the interests of this part of the Kingdom against that part had been brought forward, and the classes had been brought forward for consideration in contradistinction to the masses. Popular and prominent men, with a great deal of talk about popular sentiment, had made it their business to segregate the four parts of the kingdom instead of trying to make them cohere. Take the four parts of the kingdom separately. Out of 670 Members by which the nation was represented, England had 465; but according to the proper ratio she should have 488. That was a deficiency of 23. Wales had 30 Members; she should have only 28. That was an excess of two. Scotland had 72; she should have 71 only. That was an excess of one. Ireland had 103 Members; she should have 83. That was an excess of 20. As regarded Ireland he could show no better proof than the statement they all heard the other evening from the Prime Minister that 80 Members was her proper number, though in arriving at that figure he threw over the two Irish University Members—a course to which he (Mr. Kimber) could not assent. The excess in Ireland—taken only at 20—with Scotland and Wales in excess by 3—amounted in all to 23 as against England. If they analysed what part of England it was that suffered most from the deficiency they would find that it was the Metropolis. The Metropolis

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had 62 Members ; its proper proportion was 81, or a deficiency of 19. A large number of the constituencies in London were above the average population. He would now compare the average numbers in the four parts of the United Kingdom. In England there was only one Member to 59,000 people, in Wales there was one to 50,000, in Scotland one to 56,000, while in Ireland there was one to 45,000. In London taken separately there was only one to 73,000. So that here again Ireland had a great excess of voting power, and England a great deficiency. They were the highest and lowest of the four parts of the United Kingdom, both as regarded electors and population per seat. Ireland's maximum was less than the lowest maximum of the other three, and her minimum both of electors and population was lower than the lowest of the others. If a question of nationalities arose—and he denied that this kingdom united for nearly a century should be considered otherwise than as one nation—and the kingdom was to be segregated as regarded its Parliament, he contended that it became necessary to consider what was the weight to be given to each part in the balance of votes. If a contrast was to be made between them as nationalities and separate kingdoms give England the weight due to her. England had in the partnership a vastly larger share than all the other three countries put together. The Prime Minister the other night used the metaphor of partnership, and a very good one it was. If the question was to be looked at in this way, the share and interest of England as the senior partner ought to be taken into the scale as against the share and interest of the other partners. Leaving Wales and Scotland out of consideration England had 488 shares against 83 possessed by Ireland. To carry out the partnership metaphor was it competent for the junior partner in the business to say to the senior, "We will split this partnership or the management of it, and I insist on having the management of this or that portion and you shall have no voice in it." The Prime Minister said the other night—

"This great principle of self-government, if it be a reality at all, is a reality that never can work except by the machinery and by the laws of representation."

And he went on to lay down five cardinal postulates of his Home Rule Bill, the second of which was, "the equality of all the kingdoms is to be borne in mind." When they were going to decide the question of the severance of the Union they must be sure that the majority was correctly ascertained and properly represented the opinions of the whole of the people. Suppose the question arose as it had done in the United States? It was true they could not solve it there by means of a Home Rule Bill of any kind and had to resort to the cruel arbitrament of war, and the stronger gained the day. By all the laws which governed these things it must be conceded that the more powerful States had a right, as they had the might, to insist upon maintaining the integrity of the Union of the whole of the State. It might be said, "But we do not admit that might is right."

\*MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member is entitled only to cast side glances at the Home Bill. I think now he is going too far into that subject.

MR. KIMBER said, he thought the House would have found from his next sentence that he was only glancing at the Home Rule Bill as a side light. Were they to give preponderance of power to numbers at all. It seemed curious that no democratic authority had ever devised any other system than that power should be given to the majority, the reason, presumably being that the larger number had the greater interests and the greater physical force. Another evil arising from the disparities existing in constituencies was the temptation to our best men to look only to votes. On an historic occasion in 1886 a great Minister, turning to the Irish Benches, said: "They were 40 then, they are 85 now"; and this was his (Mr. Kimber's) reason for saying it was a temptation to look to votes. He might continue, but he was desirous not to labour the argument or to make it of a partizan character, though it was almost impossible for it not to bear upon Party politics. Still he had endeavoured to deal with the subject from the point of view of the leaders of the House on both sides, and he believed there was not a

single Member who would not wish to make the House as correct and as good a representation of the wishes and the will of the people as human hands could make them. He thought he had proved the two propositions he had laid down, and he now came to his conclusions. His first proposition was that there were great disparities existing between the constituencies in themselves in each of the four parts of the Kingdom, but especially between the four parts taken as Kingdoms, if he might use that word; secondly, while admitting that disparities must always exist, he thought he had proved they were so serious in their nature and extent that they required immediate remedy. As Parties were now divided by a narrow majority, it was impossible not to feel—one of the Kingdoms having an admitted excess of 23 Representatives and England having a deficiency of representation by 23—that if there had been proper representation at the last General Election the present majority of 40 might have been turned into a minority of six. That, he thought, was enough to make the House pause before it endorsed any constitutional change whatever, especially of so radical a nature as was proposed by the Prime Minister. They should set to work to re-model the machinery of the Constitution and its representation, by which alone, the Prime Minister had said, self-government could be obtained. If he had proved his two propositions, his conclusion upon them was that the inequalities and discrepancies existing in the constituencies ought forthwith to be made the subject of careful examination and inquiry by a Committee or Commission; and that when a remedy was found it should be immediately applied. It was not for him to suggest what means should be adopted to remedy the existing discrepancies. The constituencies in which they existed must be first ascertained; questions of boundaries might arise; questions as to the divisions of existing constituencies; and the Committee or Commission that went into the matter should have power to take into their consideration those collateral but necessary subjects—the representation of minorities, one man one vote, one vote one value, and, above all, the best means of ascertaining the value of the votes. Further, that not only should electors have votes of

equal value, but every Member representing a constituency should have an equal vote with any other Member, so that Members should no longer be under the stigma of having the nation improperly represented, and the decisions of its Representatives decided, possibly absolutely contradictory to the will of the nation. He would now deal with the Amendment, which deprecated a reference to a Committee or Commission, and suggested practically that it should be left to Ministers. He supposed the right hon. Baronet (Sir Charles Dilke) would suggest, as was done in 1884, that they should communicate with the Leaders of the Opposition and other Parties in the House, that they should sit in a sort of self-constituted Committee. He knew the great ability of the right hon. Baronet, and the great knowledge he brought to bear upon this subject in the Debates of 1884. What had struck him most in reading those Debates on the Representation of the People Bill was that the principle was not discussed in the House—that the principle or the Bill was not discussed at all. The Leaders of the two great Parties put their heads together, and the result of their deliberations was brought out cut-and-dried, so that it was no use for the House to argue or consider what the Leaders on both sides had agreed upon as a foregone conclusion. The principal thing debated was the Instruction moved by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for the University of London (Sir John Lubbock), that the Committee should have power to consider the necessity of giving a direct vote to minorities. That was very fully and ably discussed, but not on the question of principle. The principle was admitted on both sides to be good; and the only defect in the proposal as to the proportional representation plan suggested was that, in giving the second vote, there was a slight element of chance as to whether one man or another might get elected. This, however, he believed, was more a question for an actuary, and could be easily disposed of. As to the mode in which these difficulties should be dealt with, he had proposed a Committee or Commission, which was a tribunal that deliberated in the light of day, and after it reported its conclusions could be canvassed and discussed. On the occasion

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of the Representation of the People Bill they had had hon. Members making objections to the conclusions without knowing the principle on which the result had been arrived at, and he believed the same kind of thing occurred with the Bill of 1867 and the great Reform Bill of 1832, when the principle was that of lopping off—disfranchising a large number of constituencies, and enfranchising others—a patchwork way of going about the business; but perhaps it was best suited to their conditions, and he had no objection to make to it, as it was an attempt to preserve all that was good and amend all that was bad—a true Conservative principle, palatable to him and to the Party to which he belonged. What he did object to was these most important things being done except in the light of the sun, before the eyes of the people, and especially the eyes of all in the House. He begged to move his Resolution as it stood upon the Paper.

\*MR. MACARTNEY (Antrim, S.) said, the question of disparity had often occupied not only the attention of the House, but of the constituencies, and he thought his hon. Friend need not apologise, or any Member who followed him, for asking the attention of the present Assembly to this most important and grave matter. That, he thought, was conclusively proved by the Amendment placed on the Paper by the right hon. Baronet opposite (Sir C. Dilke). The question of disparity of representation was one that occupied the attention very largely of the Party opposite some years ago, and at one period of their history there was no question on which they devoted a larger portion of fiery oratory than this. He did not know whether at present they were as keen as they were in the past to interfere with this question; but, if not, it was probably because in the past the disparity was against the fortunes of their Party, whilst at present they were depending for the support they received from that very disparity which existed. He was not going to follow his hon. Friend into the general view of the question of disparity of representation which existed and

could be found throughout the whole United Kingdom, but he proposed to direct his remarks to those disparities that existed in Ireland; and he would endeavour to put his arguments as concisely as possible, and if he had to refer to any figures he would condense them into the briefest possible compass. The Party he was connected with in Ireland always protested against the inequality of the settlement arrived at in 1884-85; they took every opportunity of bringing before the notice of this House and the people the grave injustice which they believed was inflicted by the arrangement arrived at upon a large proportion of the people of Ireland, and since that period they had never ceased to urge that the population they represented had not an opportunity of making its voice heard in this House in fair proportion to relative value in Ireland. In the first place, he would urge there was nothing sacred or inviolate in the settlement arrived at in 1884-85. The right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the House himself, in introducing the Reform Bill of 1884, said no Reform Bill ever introduced pretended, or could pretend, to be a complete Bill. The right hon. Gentleman further said that in his experience he never assisted at any scheme for which its authors claimed perfection. While he (Mr. Macartney) was ready to admit the settlement of 1884-85 was probably as good a scheme as any that had been presented to the House by previous authors of redistribution or reform, it started not only with a serious and admitted blot of over-representation in Ireland and disparity of representation, but was full from end to end of other inequalities. He remembered that the conduct of the right hon. Baronet (Sir C. Dilke) when in charge of the Redistribution Bill elicited the admiration of everyone, but everyone must see that the Bill was loopholed with inequalities. Whenever a Conservative Member got up to point out that a certain portion of the country had not received a proper amount of representation, the right hon. Baronet immediately got up and was able to show conclusively that in Somerset or some other portion of the country which was entirely Conservative was also over-represented, so that not only in Ireland, but in the United Kingdom,

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the scheme of 1885, good as it might have been, was still looped with inequalities throughout. Therefore, it started with a great anomaly with regard to Ireland; and laden as it was with other inequalities, it was not surprising that not only Members of the House, but the public at large, should desire to see some relief given to the mischief that it created, and which still existed. The Leader of the House on that occasion said there were three essential provisions in a Reform Bill—first, they had to determine the right of the individual for whom they had to fix the franchise; secondly, to provide machinery for the exercise of that right, which was registration; and, thirdly, they had to gather the persons who were entitled to vote into local Committees—that was, they had to distribute the seats. He said, therefore, they were justified in claiming immediate attention to the matter brought forward. As a matter of fact, the Government themselves had invited them to inquire into the condition of Parliamentary representation, because only yesterday the Government, finding one of the essential divisions of reform, as laid down by their Leader, to be in such a mischievous condition as to require attention, had brought in a Bill to deal with the registration of voters in this country. His argument was that it was very little good to perfect the machinery for enabling the voter to assert his right to vote if, when they had given him his vote, he found it of little value in consequence of the inequalities of representation. If the Government had made up their mind that the registration machinery was so defective that it required the immediate attention of Parliament, then he said his hon. Friend was justified in bringing this matter before the House, and he hoped a further step would be taken by the Government to assure every voter that his vote was of equal value whatever part of the country it was recorded in. What was the result of the settlement of 1884-5? It was this: that Ireland was favoured. ["No, no!"] Well, he would point out his objection. Ireland was favoured; Scotland had justice done to her; whereas England had far less than justice meted out to it. When the Bill was first introduced it was stated by Mr. Forster that, upon the basis of 658 seats, Ireland was

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only entitled to 91. The scheme was afterwards re-considered when the redistribution scheme was brought in, and the Prime Minister then admitted that Ireland was only entitled to 93 votes; but on that occasion the Prime Minister declined to reduce the representation of Ireland, and the reasons he gave in the House were that he could not abandon all hope of the recovery of the population in Ireland, and he would not assume that there would be in the future a permanency of decrease. Perhaps there was some slight foundation for the hope the right hon. Gentleman then indulged in, for the opinion he then assumed; but since then some years had gone by, and they had very important facts brought before them by the Census of Ireland. They now knew that, notwithstanding that during that period Ireland had enormously increased in material prosperity and wealth, both agricultural and commercial, the population was decreasing, so that at the present moment, whatever ground there was for the hope and expectation of the right hon. Gentleman in 1884, the experience of these later years must lead everyone, both in the House and out of it, to come to the conclusion that they could not look forward to any great increase in the population in the future, and must look to the figure at which the population of Ireland now stood as the figure at which it was likely to remain for many years to come. Then there was another argument on which the right hon. Gentleman rested for not reducing the representation of Ireland. The right hon. Gentleman said that in these questions they must consider the question of vicinity and of distance. That principle, though applied to Ireland, was not applied to any other portion of the United Kingdom. Take the case of the Orkneys and Shetland. No district in Ireland, not even the most remote parts of Donegal, were half so far from this House as were either the Orkneys or Shetland. But what happened? If they turned to the constituencies of Orkney and Shetland and to those of Kerry they would find that, whereas Orkney and Shetland had over 7,000 voters and a population of over 54,000, they were only represented by one Member, whilst each Member for the four divisions

of Kerry only represented an electorate of a little over 5,000 and a population of 44,000. There was one other instance, and he would quote it, with regard to the representation of Forfarshire and King's County. The hon. Member for Forfarshire represented over 11,000 electors and a population of over 67,000, whereas each of the Members for King's County only represented an electorate of a little over 5,000 and a population of a little over 32,000. The hon. Gentleman who represented Forfarshire (Sir John Rigby) in this House had more electors than both Members for two of the divisions of King's County, and the population of Forfarshire was over that of the two divisions of King's County. He did not think the question of vicinity and distance ought to have any weight when they considered the modern convenience of railways and telegraphs; but if it was a valid argument, the principle of representation ought to be on the radius system, according to the number of miles the constituency was from Westminster. They complained not only that Ireland was over-represented, but that the distribution of this over-representation was absolutely unfair. They said that they would find, on examination of electoral statistics connected with Ireland, that almost the whole of this over-representation was contained in one Province—namely, the Province of Leinster. The professions of the Government had been one of goodwill to the minority of Ireland, and, he said, here was an opportunity for them to place that minority upon a sure basis. All the Unionists asked for was that in the matter of representation they should be placed on the same equality as the Nationalists. He hoped to prove conclusively the statements he had made as to the extraordinary disparity of representation in Ireland; and in order to do so it would be necessary for him to trouble the House with some figures. He would first take the borough representation in Ireland. The City of Cork, which returned two Members to the House, had an electorate of over 10,000 and a population of over 97,000, while the division of East Belfast, which had 1,000 more electors than the whole of the City of Cork and a population

almost equal, was only represented by one Member. But there was a still more striking instance of this disparity of representation in Ireland. The four boroughs of Galway, Kilkenny, Newry, and Waterford, which had a total electorate of 9,536 and a total population of over 71,000, sent four Members to the House, while East Belfast, with a larger electorate and a larger population, was only represented by one Member. The Irish boroughs represented by Unionist Members had an electorate of over 47,000 and a population of over 379,000. These boroughs returned six Members, giving to each Member an electorate of 7,881 and a population of over 63,000. On the other hand, the boroughs which sent 10 Nationalist Members to the House had a total electorate of 50,000 and a population of over 420,000, which gave to each of the 10 Nationalist Members an electorate of 5,000 voters and a population of 42,000; so that each Unionist Member for a borough had an electorate which exceeded the electorate of each Nationalist Member by 2,851, and a population which exceeded by over 21,000 the population represented by each Nationalist Member. He would now take the borough representation not on the basis of political opinions, but on the basis of geographical area. The Ulster boroughs—whether they returned Nationalist or Unionist Members—had a total electorate of over 48,000 and a total population of over 319,000, and, represented as they were by six Members, that gave to each Member an electorate of 6,809 and a population of 53,258. The Munster boroughs, which returned four Members, had a total electorate of 19,000 and a total population of 170,000. That gave to each Member representing a Munster borough an electorate of 4,833 and a population of 42,700. The Connaught boroughs gave an electorate of 1,655 voters and a population of 16,942 for each Member. These figures meant that each Ulster Borough Member represented 1,976 more electors and 10,555 more population than each of the Munster Borough Members; and 5,154 more electors and 36,316 more population than each of the Connaught Borough Members. Turning to the county representation in Ireland, he would take as one single instance of the great disparity

which existed the most south-western county (Kerry) and compare it with the most north-eastern county (Antrim), a portion of which he had the honour to represent. Kerry had an electorate of 20,700 voters and a population of 178,900, so that each of the four Members for that county represented in the House 5,000 electors and 44,000 inhabitants. In Antrim the total electorate was 38,000 and the population 200,000, giving to each of the four Members of the county an electorate of 9,000 and a population of 51,000, so that every Member for Antrim represented 4,500 more electors and a population 6,400 in excess of each of the Kerry Members. Take the Irish counties represented by two Members. King's County, which had an electorate of 10,000 and a population of 65,000, sent two Members, as well as Londonderry, with an electorate of 20,000 and a population of 118,000. The result was, that each Member for King's County represented only 5,000 electors, while each Member for Londonderry represented 10,000 electors; and each Member for King's County represented 32,000 of a population, while each Member for Londonderry represented 59,000 of a population. These figures proved that each of the Members for Londonderry spoke on behalf of 5,000 electors and of 26,000 of a population more than each of the Members of King's County. With regard to the county representation at large, he found that, taking all the counties which sent 15 Unionist Members to the House, each of these Members had an electorate of over 9,000, and represented a population of over 51,000; while in the Nationalist counties, which sent 69 Members, he found that each of these Members represented only an electorate of 7,000 and a population of 44,000; so that each of the County Unionist Members represented an electorate which exceeded the electorate of each of the Nationalist County Members by 1,763, and a population 6,889 greater than the population represented by each of the Nationalist County Members. Looking at the question from the point of view of selected geographical areas, and not from a Party standpoint, he found that Ulster elected 27 Members, each representing an average electorate of 8,000

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and an average population of 48,000; whereas the Leinster Members represented each an electorate of 6,000 and a population of 37,000; and the Munster Members an electorate of 7,000 and a population of 45,000 each. Between Connaught and Ulster there was very little difference so far as the county representation was concerned. But the net result of the disparity between Ulster and Munster was that each of the Ulster County Members represented an electorate which exceeded by 649 voters and a population which exceeded by 2,800 inhabitants the electorate and the population represented by each of the Munster Members; while with regard to Leinster, the average Ulster electorate exceeded by 1,944 voters and a population by 10,000 inhabitants the average electorate and population represented by each of the Leinster Members. These figures showed that the Province of Leinster was the principal seat of the inequality of the representation in Ireland. Comparing the Provinces, he found that Ulster had a Member for every 49,000 of its population, Connaught a Member for every 48,000 of its population, Munster a Member for every 46,000, while Leinster sinks as low as 42,000. It came to this: that, taking a population of 46,500 as the basis of a Parliamentary division, Leinster should be deprived of three Members, and the representation of Ulster increased by three Members. But if Ireland was to have 81 Members as proposed in the Home Rule Bill, the average population of each division would be 58,000, which was practically the average of the United Kingdom, and on that basis Leinster would be left 20 Members, Munster 20 Members, Connaught 12 Members, and Ulster 28 Members; or, in other words, Leinster would lose 8 Members, Munster 5 Members, Connaught 3 Members, and Ulster 5 Members. These figures proved conclusively that at the present moment Ireland was largely over-represented, and that that over-representation was entirely to the advantage of the Nationalists. There was no one in the House who was a greater authority on the subjects of representation and redistribution than the right hon. Baronet the Member for the Forest of Dean (Sir Charles Dilke), who had an Amendment to the Motion

on the Paper to the effect that the attention of the Government should be called to the question with a view to future legislation; and he would be glad to support the hon. Baronet if he had any chance of inducing the Government to introduce legislation. But as a measure of redistribution would mean the loss of 20 seats to the Nationalists, he did not think the right hon. Baronet would succeed in extorting such a pledge from the Government. He had, therefore, great pleasure in seconding the Motion.

Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That there exist serious disparities in the representation in Parliament of the people of the United Kingdom; that these disparities are of such a nature and extent as to involve the danger of the will of the nation being misrepresented and possibly controverted by the decisions of the House of Commons, as at present constituted; and that therefore such disparities should forthwith be examined into by an impartial Committee or Commission, and remedied."—(*Mr. Kimber.*)

\*SIR CHARLES W. DILKE (Forest of Dean): Mr. Speaker, the hon. Gentleman who has just sat down said the representation of Ireland was honey-combed and loopholed with anomalies. That is so; but anomalies just as great exist in the local representation of Great Britain, and these anomalies will continue to exist so long as this House is content to proceed on the old lines of redistribution, and makes no move in the direction of proportional representation or equal electoral divisions. The Motion deals with the whole subject. The speech of the hon. Gentleman who has just sat down has had very special reference to Ireland; but the Irish Members may shortly disappear from the House (and I personally have never been converted or perverted away from the Bill of 1886), or they may stay, but stay in changed numbers and proportions, and after a redistribution for Ireland only and the establishment of a scale different from that which prevails in Great Britain. On the other hand, it is undoubtedly the case that the present raising of the question by the Government as regards Ireland forces on the consideration of the question here—that is, in Great Britain; and helps to justify some such Motion as that of my hon. Friend. It is somewhat

noticeable that the Conservative Party now grumble at the manner in which the existing settlement benefits Ireland at the expense of Great Britain, but that, although they attack for it the Party who furnish the present Government, they are equally responsible. On the 3rd March, 1885, the House divided upon a Motion to reduce Wales, which, under the 1884 scheme, when it was new, was the most over-represented of the principal parts of the United Kingdom—more so, even, than Ireland—to reduce Wales, I say, to 25 and Ireland to 90. That Motion was negatived by the House by far more than a Party majority—namely, by 132 to 25. In the course of the Debate on that occasion, to which the hon. Member has alluded, we pointed out the difficulty in the way of a reduction of the Welsh or Irish Members, how it could not be accomplished without the adoption, in Wales and Ireland, of a scale different from that existing in England or established for Scotland by the Bill. For example, the first new seat to be given in any more complete scheme would have been an additional seat to Cardiff, which it was with the greatest regret that we found ourselves compelled to refuse. Again, although complaint came chiefly from the Ulster Protestants, the first three seats in Ireland to go in the event of a fuller scheme would have been two University seats and one Northern borough. To put the matter briefly. Wales and Ireland were not exceptionally or tenderly dealt with in the scheme of 1884-5, but they were accidentally helped by the scale, as they would have been by any moderate scheme of reform, and this fact was perfectly present to Lord Salisbury and Sir Stafford Northcote, and was accepted by them. So rigid were we in refusing to make any exceptions in 1885 of any kind that we refused Cardiff, and could not do otherwise, strong as were even then her claims, because we had to adhere to the Census population of 1881, and had agreed not to take account of increases or decreases which might have happened, or which might be alleged to have happened, since that time. In the Debate of March, 1885, the agreement between the parties was quoted to the House, and the reference to Ireland was as follows:—



"In the event of the House declining to increase the number of Members for Scotland, Ireland to be reduced from 103 to 100."

Here the agreement ceased. We pointed out what must be the three seats to go, and Lord Salisbury said that that would "never do," but made no alternative suggestion; and the result was that the Government decided to make the increase of Members to Scotland an essential portion of the Bill. I wish distinctly to repeat that Ireland and Wales could not have been brought nearer to the English or the Scotch scale, which was the same, Scotland having been increased up to the English limits, without breaking the general rules laid down by the agreement of the parties for enfranchisement and disfranchisement of boroughs. It is now, however, apparently the intention to wholly break through the rules of 1884-5 and the agreement between the parties at that time in the case of Ireland. An essential portion of the scheme of 1884-5 and of the agreement with Lord Salisbury was that the boroughs and the counties, on the whole, should be represented at pretty much the same rate. In Ireland, owing to the small number of towns, the boroughs remained at a little higher than the county rate, and the decrease of population has increased that disproportion since 1885. The proposals now contemplated are, therefore, from this point of view unsatisfactory, and involve a departure from the principle of population and a great increase of electoral anomalies. The Irish boroughs being over-represented as contrasted with the counties, we hear of a proposal to take away 21 county seats and not a single borough seat, although three or four borough seats should be the very first seats to go, as they are far too small for separate representation and are decreasing. Turning to Great Britain, there is no difference of main principle between the Motion and the Amendment, because both admit serious disparities and point to further redistribution. The extent of the disparity is at present eight to one. There are some electors—as, for example, those of the Romford Division of Essex, and those of Cardiff—whose electoral power is

*Sir Charles W. Dilke*

but one-eighth that of others—for example, Wick. If it is said, "How is this possible after your redistribution?" the answer is that in 1885 neither Party was willing to have a really complete scheme, to which several of us—some on both sides—some even on the Opposition Front Bench—were favourable. But what we did constituted a vast improvement, for when I first began to call attention to the subject in the 1874 Parliament, and up to 1885, the extreme disproportions, instead of 8 to 1, were 250 to 1. Still, however, such as they are, they are far greater than those which exist in any other country in the world. There is another point on which we may agree with my hon. Friend. It would be well, if possible, to have an automatic redistribution every ten years, based on Census figures, and this principle has been adopted with advantage in many colonies, but there are difficulties in the way here which do not exist with them, to which I will presently make allusion under another head. All those who sit in this quarter of the House, all genuine Radicals in or outside its walls, ought to be in favour of the decrease of the number of the over-represented very small borough constituencies, because, although some of these are pure, taking them as a class they are the homes of that electoral corruption which is still, in spite of a great improvement in some districts, disgraceful to the country. We ought all, therefore, to be in favour of going as far as we can in the direction of diminishing anomalies, but we cannot go all the way and abolish them, without breaking down the distinction between borough and county, and abolishing borough and county boundaries. I, for one, am very doubtful whether this extreme course will be advocated, when it comes to the point, by the Tory Party, or, if so advocated, will be popular in the country. Another point raised by my hon. Friend concerns the representation of minorities. On this I will not dwell. The matter in 1885 was named by the Conservative Party as regarded Ireland only, and when it came to be discussed in the House, the House was dead against it. Strong as was the case made out by the hon. Member for Cornwall, then sitting for Liskeard, and others, the House evidently felt embarrassment at placing in a Bill, or recom-

mending to the country arrangements for preferential voting or the transfer of votes ; and the matter was not seriously entertained. I rather doubt myself whether it is likely to be otherwise in future. The hon. Member was on strong ground when he entered in detail into the absurdities of the existing system. I was allowed in 1885 to retain and to exercise my individual right to declare personally in favour of a far wider scheme than that which was at that time adopted. But what was the point on which we came to practical issue, and a point which still remains, and has been shirked as regards decision by the hon. Member? University representation, which, if you are to adopt a population basis, must be the very first to go ; which, in our opinion, is wholly anomalous and indefensible in our day. The hon. Member has been justified in making much of the case of his own constituency. It is a less strong case than that of two divisions of Essex, or that of Cardiff, which exceeds the number of electors of Wandsworth by the number of electors by which another borough constituency in Great Britain returns a Member to this House, and by a number which exceeds that by which several borough constituencies in Ireland return Members to this House. In short, then, I agree with the hon. Member as regards the nature and the extent of the disease. I even admit to him that in the present state of things there is a real danger of the reversal in this House of the opinion of the country, although since 1880 that has not on any important occasion been proved. There are, however, questions, such as those of redistribution of seats itself and of the extinction of corrupt practices in small borough constituencies, upon which at any moment it might occur. When we come to remedy, I am less extreme than my hon. Friend, though he calls himself a Conservative. With the Irish difficulty out of our way, by the withdrawal of the Irish Members from this House or by the reduction of their numbers, it would be very easy to greatly improve on the old lines the proportionality of representation here. It is difficult to justify the separate representation in this House of boroughs containing much less than half the average number of electors as well as far less than half the average

population. Now, if we look to the boroughs that have separate representation, although with both less than 4,000 electors, and less than 20,000 population, we find that, taking the recent change at Pontefract into account, such borough constituencies in Great Britain return seven Liberals and 14 Conservatives to this House. If we, at the same time, slightly raise the limit for taking away one seat from boroughs which have two, we obtain one Liberal and two Conservative second seats ; and with the seven Conservative University seats, we find ourselves in possession, by a redistribution, of eight Liberal and 23 Conservative seats. These would go one to Cardiff, one to the Isle of Wight, three or four to London (chiefly to Conservative parts of London), two to Essex, and some three to other county seats, and the House have to be reduced by about 20 Members. Such a scheme in its Party sense, like any redistribution scheme which at this moment can be conceived as possible, would give a slight advantage to the Liberals. It would give this great gain to the country, that, while some of the seats to go would be corrupt, all the new seats to be given would be pure seats. This would be a change upon the old lines. Upon this system it would be easy to reduce anomalies, so that the extreme anomalies, instead of being eight to one, would not exceed four to one in their proportion. Now, for a scheme on the new lines—a revolutionary scheme, such as that advocated by the hon. Member who calls himself a Conservative. Such a scheme must break up the distinction between the borough and county, must destroy the boundaries of ancient boroughs, the boundaries of counties, and, I repeat, it is doubtful to me whether it would be popular in the country or obtain general support among Conservatives. It is the Chartist scheme of equal electoral districts. In 1884, Lord Salisbury and Sir Stafford Northcote took the exactly opposite position. They insisted on our doing all in our power to obtain a separation of urban from rural districts, and extension of borough boundaries, but a rigid separation between county and borough. It was the only point upon which they insisted in placing, themselves, their

own words in the instructions to the Commissioners, and if it is the intention of the Conservative leaders to reverse that policy it is the leaders who ought to say so, and not the hon. Member for Wandsworth. It has been my object to-day to help on the cause of a more complete redistribution which I have at heart by a non-Party speech, by an impartial consideration of the subject, but I freely admit the interest of Radicalism in equal representation. A new scheme, whether a large or small, can, however, not be carried for us either by a Select Committee, however influential, or by a Royal Commission. It can only be settled in its main lines by the existence first of a common desire and then by mutual help. It is hopeless in these days for either party to think of carrying such a scheme against the other. If at any time there is a general wish for a further redistribution, then I am convinced that the best plan will be that some meetings should take place between, say, the President of the Local Government Board and the right hon. Baronet the Member for West Bristol, or the Member for the Everton Division of Liverpool, and that they should then sketch out a scheme which should not be forced upon the House, but submitted to publicity, together with their reasons for recommending it to the public. I beg, Sir, to move the Amendment which stands in my name.

#### Amendment proposed,

To leave out from the word "That," to the end of the Question, in order to add the words "while deprecating the reference of the subject of Redistribution of Seats to a Select Committee or Royal Commission, this House is of opinion that the great discrepancies in electoral power which still exists between Constituencies deserve the attention of Her Majesty's Government, with a view to legislation in a future Session if general agreement can be arrived at."—(*Sir Charles W. Dilke*),—instead thereof.

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question."

MR. MAC NEILL (Donegal, S.) said, he wished, in the first place, to congratulate the Tory Party on their new-found scheme of reform. Now, nothing would suit these advocates of reform except equal electoral districts, and nothing

*Sir Charles W. Dilke*

would satisfy them except one vote one value. That was a great change, for it was the Tories who were the strongest opponents of reform up to 1832, who threatened the country with civil war if the rotten boroughs were abolished, and who opposed with great vehemence for 50 years the introduction of the Ballot. And now, in their extremity, they thought it might help them if they brought forward this Motion, because there was undoubtedly a larger proportion of Members representing Irish constituencies than the proportion of population of Ireland as compared with Great Britain entitled them to. He admitted that if Ireland, at the present moment, were represented proportionately to Great Britain they would be entitled not to 103 or 101 Members, but to 80 only. But he was extremely sorry to hear the Member for Antrim say that Ireland was over-represented; the hon. Member was not sent by his constituents to say that. In 1873 Ireland, so far from being over-represented, was under-represented, and would have been entitled to no fewer than 112 Members. In that year Mr. Butt made a speech at a Home Rule Conference in which he said that England, in a few years, would insist that the number of Irish Members should be reduced to a certain number to meet their diminishing population. They might say that Ireland was over-represented numerically, but he thought he might say this much, that up to 1875 Ireland was really outraged in point of representation; outraged from the time of the Union. From that time Ireland had been slightly over-represented, and this, the only benefit which the Union had ever conferred upon her, it was now sought to take away from her. At the time of the Union the English representation was 558 Members, and the number of Members in the Irish House of Commons at the same date was 300. Ireland had a population equal to two-thirds of the population of Great Britain, and she would then have been entitled not to 100 Members, but to 300 on the numerical proportion. Lord Castlereagh, however, in arranging the proportion, said the population of Ireland was two-fifths of the United Kingdom, and that if population only was considered she would be

entitled to 202 Members, but he took into consideration, not only the population, but the Revenue, and exports and imports, and he came to the conclusion that Ireland was entitled only to 108½ Members, and he took away the eight and a half and left 100 as Ireland's share of the representation. In those days the idea of proportionate representation did not come into the estimates of practical politicians, and Ireland was cheated out of her due share. If she had got the number that her population entitled her to she would have had 291, and calculated on the basis of revenue and national wealth, Ireland should have had 176 Members. In 1873, as shown by Mr. Butt, Ireland was entitled to 112, but at the present time undoubtedly she was only entitled to 82. It would be strongly urged, though, that pending the settlement of the Irish question, and because of the wrong that was done Ireland in her representation in the past, that her representation should be retained at its present strength. It was an interesting fact, in connection with the representation of Ireland, that from the day of the Union down to the present day, with one single exception, there had not been one representative of Dublin University who was not the salaried officer of the Tory Party. On this ground he hoped the Universities, when they came to be dealt with, would not be spared.

\*MR. T. W. RUSSELL said, the right hon. Baronet below him (Sir C. Dilke) had admitted that there were anomalies in the Irish representation, but he had answered that by saying there were also anomalies in the English representation, and he proposed to set off the English anomalies against those in the Irish representation. In Ireland, however, the anomalies were all on one side, whereas in England they tended to correct each other. That was a very important difference. One part of Ireland, the North, was not over-represented according to its population, but the South and West were admittedly over-represented.

MR. M. J. KENNY: Derry City is an exception to that.

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MR. T. W. RUSSELL said, the right hon. Baronet had admitted that Ireland was over-represented, but he went on to say that that question was provided for in the Bill before the House, so that there was no use in talking further about it. The over-representation was admitted, and was going to be provided for, and they were not at liberty to discuss the Home Rule Bill. They had had the admission from the highest authority in that House—the Prime Minister—that this over-representation existed. He should have thought when the evil had been admitted, when it had been practically acknowledged that there were 23 Irish Members in excess in that House—he should have thought that instead of the right hon. Baronet saying that was going to be corrected and remedied, the proper course would have been that before a revolutionary measure was introduced care should have been taken to have a proper representation of the people on the question. The right hon. Baronet said in his speech that in 1884–5, when this question of redistribution was before the House, it was impossible to deal with it. No one knew better than the right hon. Baronet what took place on that occasion; and the opinion outside the House was that both Parties in the House were afraid to touch it. That was the reason they were now face to face with the fact that they were asked to carry out a revolutionary Bill for Ireland when Parliament admitted there were 23 Members too many from that country sitting in the House, and if that anomaly were remedied the Prime Minister would not be sitting on the Treasury Bench.

MR. FISHER (Fulham) thought the hon. Member for Wandsworth had done a distinct service in calling the attention of the House to the gross inequalities in our present electoral system. The right hon. Baronet (Sir C. Dilke), who was a great master of the science of electioneering, had told them that the doctrine of vicinity had been abandoned by the Government in their redistribution scheme of 1885. He had his doubts upon

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the matter. At all events, they had some foundation for thinking that the doctrine had a great deal to do with only 62 Members being allotted to the Metropolis of London, whilst 103 Members were given to Ireland. In his speech on the Franchise Bill the right hon. Member for Midlothian laid down what was known as the centrifugal principle. In that speech the right hon. Gentleman stated—

“I am certainly disposed to admit that very large and closely concentrated populations ought not to have quite so high a proportional share in the representation of the country as rural and separate populations, because naturally political power in these concentrated masses is sharper, quicker, and more vehement. That consideration, of course, would apply most of all to the Metropolis.”

\*SIR CHARLES W. DILKE (interposing) : At that moment the suggestion before the right hon. Gentleman was that London should have 48 Members ; the number was afterwards increased.

MR. FISHER : The right hon. Member for Midlothian only seems partly to have given up the centrifugal principle.

SIR CHARLES W. DILKE : London received its full proportion as compared with the United Kingdom.

MR. FISHER said, most certainly the right hon. Gentleman carried out that theory with regard to Ireland. The right hon. Gentleman, on a former occasion, said it was fair that those parts of the country which, like Scotland and Ireland, were separated by great distances, not omitting the element of the sea, should be more liberally dealt with in proportion to the representatives they ought to send. If, for the sake of argument, they admitted that generosity ought to be applied in certain cases it ought not to amount to inflicting a positive injustice upon the great Metropolis of London. London suffered the greatest inconvenience from this gross inequality of treatment. She had a population larger than Ireland, and yet while Ireland sent 103 Members to Parliament, London was only entitled to send 62. Instead of the introduction of the Home Rule Bill making the subject less pressing, he thought it made it more pressing.

*Mr. Fisher*

The time was coming when Londoners would find they had only 62 Members representing the Metropolis, whereas Ireland would send 80 Members, who might use their voting power not only for Imperial questions, but also to turn out a Government which might deal with London questions in a London way. That was a most important consideration, apart altogether from the Imperial aspect of the case. He was at a loss to know why the borough he represented, which had 12,000 voters, should only have one-fifth the voting power and voice that were going to be given to boroughs in Ireland, not only on Imperial matters, but also on matters which affected the English people alone. It would be the duty of the London Members to call attention to this gross injustice, and they should not rest content until the intelligent citizens of London had their fair share in the representative Government of this country, and full voice and voting power in controlling the destinies of the Empire.

MR. BYLES (York, W.R., Shipley) said, that with regard to the representation of London, judging from the last Census, it was too little, whilst the representation of many small boroughs in the country was too large. As to the speech of the Member for South Tyrone, it was a little surprising to him (Mr. Byles) to find an Irish Member getting up in his place and proposing the reduction of the representation of his own country. The principle enunciated by the Member for Tyrone seemed to him a dangerous one. The hon. Member had said that the discrepancies in the electoral system alluded to by the right hon. Baronet were equally as great in England as in Ireland, but that in Ireland they were all on one side, whereas in England they tended to correct themselves by being on different sides. If, in dealing with the question of the representation of the constituencies of this country, they were to apply the consideration of what side discrepancies were upon, they would get into a very dangerous dilemma, and he entirely disapproved of applying any such principle. The question before the House was simply whether they should proceed to correct the inequalities which existed by

the issue of a Commission, or by the usual method of proceeding in that House when time allowed. They were all agreed that these discrepancies existed. Whereas he (Mr. Byles) had been sent there to represent 15,000 voters, one of the most recently elected Members represented only 2,000. Both sides were agreed as to the existence of these anomalies and inequalities, and the question was how could they best be remedied? They all seemed to recognise the facts of the case, so that there seemed no necessity to issue a Commission to find out the facts. He should, therefore, support the Amendment, because he believed the proper way to proceed in the matter was by the introduction of a Bill, when they had an opportunity of dealing with it. The Irish Home Rule Bill had been referred to as dealing with this question of redistribution of seats in Ireland, so that the question of Irish representation became of less consequence; and when after that Bill had passed, and the time of Members of the House was more at their own disposal, it would be possible for them to so adjust the representation of this country as to overcome the gross inequalities which had been spoken of. As they were all agreed upon the facts, he hoped it would be possible to determine the question by agreement between Parties on both sides of the House. He would gladly see a good deal more of the legislation of that House carried by sensible agreement between gentlemen on both sides with great capacity for discussing these matters.

**\*THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Sir W. HARCOURT, Derby):**

I have listened with a great deal of agreement to what has been said on both sides of the House in the course of this Debate. No one can deny that great inequalities exist in the representation, not only in Ireland but also in London. That I am perfectly prepared to admit, and before long, probably sooner rather than later, there must be another Redistribution Bill. The only question is when this reform is to be carried out, and how it is to be done? The Motion is a proposal to appoint a Commission or Committee. This, I think, I can confidently

say, that no great change of this kind, no great reform measure, has ever been undertaken in that method. I am quite sure it would have been repugnant to the ideas of all great statesmen who had the conduct of affairs in former times to have dealt with these matters in the way that is now proposed. I remember myself hearing Mr. Disraeli saying in this House, "You cannot refer the British Constitution to a Select Committee." That is perfectly true, and that is not the manner in which you can deal with questions of this immense importance. It is all very well to talk about an impartial Committee; hon. Members speak a great deal about these impartial Bodies, but we see mighty little of them, but an impartial Committee is not, I think, very likely to be obtained. These questions are always settled, and always will have to be settled, by a sort of balance of political forces in this country, as in 1832 and 1884. I have not risen to traverse any of the statements or principles laid down by the Mover of this Motion; but I would venture to suggest to him that, having attained the object he has in view by bringing these facts under the consideration of the country and the House, he should not press his Motion to a Division. I believe what the Mover of the Amendment wants is this: He deprecates the reference of the subject of the redistribution of seats to a Select Committee of the House or to a Royal Commission, but he declares that the discrepancies that exist deserve our attention, with a view to legislation. The subject must be dealt with very soon, and in my opinion what we want is not absolute symmetry, but a general rule of thumb agreement as to a common-sense adjustment of the representation of the country. Under such an adjustment as that—an adjustment, of course, which I hope would be recognised as fair—the Metropolis would have more Members, a larger share of representation than at present, and some smaller constituencies would be done away with altogether. After these expressions of my views on the part of the Government, I hope the hon. Member will withdraw his Motion. I am sure he will be satisfied with the views which I have stated, and that the country

will be informed by the discussion which has taken place on this Motion.

\***MR. KIMBER** said, in accepting, as he willingly did, the very valuable admissions of the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer, he would like to say a word or two. He was glad the right hon. Gentleman had admitted his facts, and that a remedy must be sooner than later applied. There was very little difference between himself and the Mover of the Amendment. The method adopted was not so material. He thought there ought to be some remedy for the excessive Irish and deficient English representation. That voting power of Ireland had been used in the past on questions of grave importance, and it was now to be used in passing a Bill which might be regarded as of the first importance to all of them. The injustice of the present arrangement ought to be remedied before any great Constitutional changes were passed or considered. That was his opinion, and he hoped it met with the sympathy of the House. He thanked the right hon. Gentleman for his reception of the Motion, and trusted he would, with his colleagues in the Government, give the whole subject their consideration, before they proceeded with any Bills to effect constitutional changes.

\***SIR CHARLES W. DILKE**: In order to facilitate the hon. Member withdrawing his Motion, I wish, Sir, to withdraw my Amendment, and to express the great satisfaction with which I have listened to the declaration of the Government this afternoon.

Amendment and Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

#### EAST INDIA (CONSUMPTION OF GANJA).

Address for "Copies of the following Papers relating to the Consumption of Ganja and other drugs in India:—(1.) Despatch from the Secretary of State for India to the Government of India, No. 59 (Revenue), dated the 6th day of August 1891; (2.) Letter from the Government of India, No. 212 (Finance and Commerce), dated the 9th day of August 1892, with enclosures; (3.)

*Sir W. Harcourt*

Despatch from the Secretary of State for India to the Government of India, No. 99 (Revenue), dated the 20th day of October 1892; (4.) Report on cultivation of and trade in Ganja in Bengal by Hem Chunder Kerr; and (5.) Article on Hemp, or Cannabis Sativa, by Dr. Watt, C.I.E., Reporter on Economic Products with the Government of India, published in the Second Volume of the Dictionary of Economic Products of India."—(*Mr. Caine.*)

#### FISHERIES.

##### MOTION FOR A SELECT COMMITTEE.

\***SIR ALBERT ROLLIT** (Islington, S.) said, the following Motion stood on the Paper in his name:—

"That a Select Committee be appointed to consider the expediency of prohibiting the landing and sale of under sized flat-fish."

He understood that the principle and object of his Motion was approved and was accepted by the Government, and that being so he would not press the Resolution on the attention of the House. He wished to say, however, that in the opinion of many the fisheries were being injured by the landing and sale of immature fish, and as other nations, particularly Belgium and Denmark, had passed laws for the preservation of the harvest of the sea, England ought to consider the expediency of doing the same.

\***THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE** (**MR. MUNDELLA**, Sheffield, Brightside): I am glad the hon. Member has taken this course, and I will only say that we consider the scope of his Motion too limited. A wider inquiry is necessary, and we are prepared to nominate a Committee to deal with the subject, not only as affecting this country but also as affecting Scotland and Ireland. On that Committee we will have the aid of the experienced officers of the Fishery Boards of Ireland, England and Scotland, and I think we shall have the support of all parts of the House in the appointment of the inquiry.

Notice taken, that 40 Members were not present; House counted, and 40 Members not being present,

House adjourned at ten minutes after Eight o'clock, till To-morrow.

## HOUSE OF COMMONS,

*Wednesday, 22nd February 1893.*

## ORDERS OF THE DAY.

## PLACES OF WORSHIP ENFRANCHISEMENT BILL.—(No. 5.)

## SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

MR. STUART RENDEL (Montgomeryshire) moved the Second Reading of this Bill, which, he said, though new to this Parliament was not new to the House of Commons. The Bill was substantially the Bill brought in by his hon. Friend the Member for Mid Glamorganshire (Mr. S. T. Evans)—who was, in fact, the author of the measure—in the last Parliament. The reception it had met with in that Parliament was extremely satisfactory, for its Second Reading had been carried by a majority of two to one, though it did not reach the stage of Third Reading. In another Session the Bill was again brought in by his hon. Friend the Member for the Eifion Division of Carnarvon (Mr. G. Bryn Roberts), who had amended it so as to bring it into accordance with the general feeling of the House as shown in the discussions of the previous year. The Bill originally was founded on the distinct recommendation of the Town Holdings Select Committee, which in the Report it made to the House in 1889 stated—

“That it is most desirable on public grounds that Religious Bodies should have the power to acquire the freehold of their places of worship.”

The House would remember that the Town Holdings Committee consisted of 25 Members representing all Parties of the House, appointed by the Conservative Government, and therefore having a majority of Conservatives; and it was important to note that the recommendation which he had quoted had received the unanimous assent of that Committee. It was very satisfactory to hon. Members from Wales to find that there was nothing like Party opposition to this

measure, which, though applicable to England as well, was specially required by Wales, but that, on the contrary, it received a very considerable amount of support from both sides of the House. The recommendation of the Town Holdings Select Committee was largely due to the evidence it had heard from Wales. That evidence referred to two very interesting communities very characteristic of Wales. When Welsh artizans and labourers congregated together in any part of the world their first desire was to establish Sunday schools, which were intended for adults as well as for children, and their next step was to provide a chapel. In the cases of the great slate quarries at Penrhyn, and of another large enterprise at Festiniog, these courses had been taken by the Welsh workmen; but it happened, as it almost invariably happened in Wales, that the land was in possession of landlords who deemed it more convenient to themselves not to surrender the freehold of the land required for the chapels. One would have thought that an equal indulgence would have been shown to these workmen who desired places for religious worship as was so often shown to persons who wanted to open public-houses. But that was not so; and the object of the Bill was to provide that land thus acquired on lease for places of public worship should have a freehold tenure. In both the districts he had mentioned, the places of worship were all built on leasehold tenures. The tenures were not of very great duration. In one district it was for 30 years, and in the other for 75 years. Not only had the workmen at Festiniog built their chapels, but they had also built 1,500 houses for themselves, and in that way they had given the most interesting evidence of their thriftiness and independence, and of their desire to establish a community that would be of value to the local industry and a credit to the country. These great bodies of workmen in Wales were, happily, possessed of a strong public spirit, and of a deep interest in politics. In fact, their politics were dearest to them next to their religion. Unfortunately, however, the circumstance that their chapels were built upon leasehold property had supplied an undesirable conflict between their political and their religious interests. Unfortunately, the landlord was



almost invariably diametrically opposed to them in politics and religion. [*Cries of "No, no!"*] It might be a matter of opinion; but he asserted that the views of the Welsh landowners, as a rule, were strongly opposed to the political, social, and religious opinions professed by the workmen, and, under these circumstances, the one desire of the landlord was to assert absolute and complete control over the chapels. Thus, when the leases of these chapels were about to drop, there was an anxiety felt on the part of these men not to give any offence to the landlord or to the Political Party of the landlord so as not to endanger the renewal of the lease—a state of things which, he believed the House would agree, was most undesirable. He wished to call attention to the fact that the Church of England had laid down excellent rules for guidance in this matter. The Ecclesiastical Commissioners had long ago laid down the rule that churches should not be built on leasehold sites; and that being so, he asked hon. Members of the Church of England to act in regard to this Bill on the excellent and very ancient rule of "doing to others as they would wish others to do unto them." The Church of England had the power to purchase sites for churches compulsorily, but this Bill asked power simply to acquire existing sites of chapels and meeting-houses. The Bill was, in short, an extremely simple and limited measure. Powers were given to Trustees to compulsorily purchase sites occupied by chapels under leases of not less than 30 years, and the consideration was to be—unless otherwise agreed to—a perpetual rent-charge, so that small transactions should not be overloaded by the cost of proving title. The amount of compensation in the case of the parties not coming to an agreement was to be fixed by arbitration, the arbitrators to be appointed failing the consent of both parties by the County Court; and there was also a provision under which, in the event of free sale, the right of re-entry and pre-emption should be given to the original owner. He hoped the Bill would recommend itself to the acceptance of the House.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."—(*Mr. Stuart Rendel.*)

*Mr. Stuart Rendel*

MR. J. A. RENTOUL (Down, E.) said, he moved the rejection of the Bill because there was no definition whatever attempted of the phrase "Religious Body," and that went to the whole essence and substance of the Bill. With the object of the promoters of the Bill he was entirely in accord. He had been a supporter of the Bill in the past, but he had supported it on the assurance that some attempt would be made to define the phrase "Religious Body," and he thought that this was the proper stage in the progress of the Bill to bring up this point. He would not, perhaps, have taken the step of moving the rejection of the Bill had he not been himself a Nonconformist, and therefore in strong sympathy with the promoters of the Bill. He observed that the Bill proposed to confer compulsory powers. He thought compulsory powers should not in operations of this kind be used unless there was a great necessity for such use, and no case of a strong and pressing necessity had been made in the present instance. It was admitted that compulsory powers were sought for, and the Bill also involved breach of contract. He did not for a moment say there might not be necessity for breaking contracts, that there might not be reasons why they should be permitted to be broken, but he thought it would be admitted by all that a strong case should be made before legislative action was taken. Then, again, the Bill was entirely without precedent; that was to say, it was unprecedented that legislation of this sort should be adopted without any definition as to what class of property the Bill applied. It was also perfectly evident that those landlords who had been most generous in the past were the men most hit by the Bill. Take, for instance, two estates. On one the landlord had been most generous and open-handed in the matter of giving sites on lease; but on the other estate the landlord had acted in an entirely contrary direction, yet it would be the generous man who would be hit most through his generosity. Then, again, this Bill was clearly a species of endowment of Religious Bodies. He had no objection to endowment of Religious Bodies; he should be glad to see it extended to Bodies that had not this privilege; but hon. Gentlemen who ob-

jected to religious endowments must have a difficulty when they recollected this was—and no one could attempt to show that it was not—an endowment of Religious Bodies, a compulsory endowment out of the pockets of people who very often did not belong to the Religious Body they were compelled to endow. A measure of that sort was a very strong measure indeed. The hon. Member who moved the Second Reading spoke of the chapels in Wales, and of those out of sympathy with the views of those chapels, but by this Bill the man out of sympathy with the views of those chapels was to be compelled to endow those chapels. ["No, no!"] Surely it was impossible to argue contrary to that proposition. The landlord, they were told, was bitterly hostile to these chapels, and that was the man who was to be compelled, to a certain extent, to endow these chapels. He did not say there was not strong reason for compelling him in that direction, but he mentioned this to show that this Bill was a strong measure, and being a strong measure there must be a strong case made out with regard to its necessity. But he would next notice that this Bill tended, in so far as its small power lay, to increase religious sects, and he thought hon. Gentlemen opposite from Wales would admit that the increase of religious sects was bad. It had been said by a celebrated Bishop of the Church of England that the weakness of Nonconformity lay in its power of breaking itself up into small sections. That was admitted as a great truth, and there was certainly more hostility between Nonconformist Churches amongst themselves than between the Church of England and Nonconformity. This Bill, so far as its power went, did decidedly tend to increase the number of different little sects and Bodies, and it tended to foster sects which, though called religious, he maintained were absolutely irreligious. There were a great many sects in this country, mentioned in official lists of Religious Bodies, which the bulk of the Nonconformists of the country would pronounce to be a burlesque. If the Bill, through its looseness of definition, tended to endow certain so-called Religious Bodies which the Methodists, Baptists, Independents, Presbyterians, and the great Noncon-

formist denominations of this country pronounced a burlesque, it appeared to him the Bill needed a clear Definition Clause in that direction. He had mentioned these objections and difficulties which lay in the way of the passage of the Bill, but he did so remarking that it was possible the necessity for the Bill might be so great that all those difficulties ought to be swept away. He also mentioned these difficulties to show there was a strong case against the Bill, and consequently there should be a stronger case made in its favour before it passed. It would be idle to say there was not a case for the Bill, and that there could not be strong reasons and arguments produced why the Bill should not pass. That was so; but he mentioned these various matters to point out to the Nonconformist Bodies there were great difficulties in the way of the Bill. There was one particular difficulty of very great strength, and one which he did not think could be met at all; and that was the application of the Bill to under leases. Suppose a landlord let a house to a tenant and that tenant chose to let the house to what he might call a Religious Body, the landlord's interest was gone; that was to say, the Bill at once applied, and he could conceive a method used by a tenant to rob a landlord of his property. Suppose a tenant had rented a large house in which there was a large room, or having a wing built on to it; suppose the tenant sub-let the whole house to a Religious Body on the understanding that the Religious Body should use the large room or wing, and re-let the house back to him after acquiring a property in the house. Such a case as that was possible. ["No, no!"] He would like any hon. Member to take up the case and show how it would be impossible, or how it would be possible to meet such a case and prevent the Religious Body using the compulsory powers of the Bill. But then, again, suppose the case of a Religious Body changing its creed altogether. A Body starting with the name "Independent," from its very name would be allowed to adopt any sort of creed it wished; and if that Body chose to turn itself into an Atheistical Body, there was nothing to prevent them. He mentioned this because he was convinced the promoters of the Bill promoted it on religious grounds; and if that was their object, he was sure they

would be only too glad to have pointed out to them an extreme difficulty that might arise. With regard to so-called Religious Bodies, there was a list given in *Whitaker's Almanack* describing 250 cases. There were amongst them a large number of names that could be read out if one's purpose was to amuse the House ; but as that was not his purpose, he should only mention some that struck him as rather peculiar. For example, they knew there was a well-known Body called "The Independents ;" but we found in *Whitaker's* list a body called "The Dependents," and they, surely, would be in direct contradistinction to "The Independents," and this Bill would tend to endow two sects that were diametrically opposite to each other. Again, in the list they found there were many names given of Bodies between which, so far as one could guess, the difference must be infinitesimal. Again, they had amongst the so-called religious sects names that had nothing to do with religion. For example, they found in the list "Seamen," with no qualifying word. Then there were "The Secularists," "The Young Men's Christian Association," and "The Young Women's Christian Association," and they were all given as Religious Bodies in the list. Under this Bill, it seemed to him, they might all clearly be brought in, and an excellent case made for taking over compulsorily all hydropathic establishments in the country, because they knew perfectly well that in a large number of them a weekly religious service was conducted with a special service on the Sabbath. That being so, the Bill clearly wanted a Definition Clause, and his objection to the Bill was entirely owing to the absence of that Definition Clause. If hon. Gentlemen opposite would meet him in this matter, he should be most happy to give to the Bill a support instead of an opposition. He certainly thought the Bill ought not to be passed without naming the Religious Bodies to which it was supposed to refer. Some one asked how that could be done ? He had spoken to some supporters of the Bill, and they admitted the difficulty ; but would it not be possible to name four or five leading Nonconformist Bodies and make the Bill apply to them, and them alone ? ["No, no !"] Someone said "No" ; but before a privilege was conferred, ought not a sect to

have made a place for itself ; should it not have done something to prove a right to the privilege conferred upon it ? Clearly, under the Bill, any two or three men could meet together and call themselves a Religious Body to entitle them to the benefits conferred by the Bill, and surely those interested in Nonconformity did not want such a thing as that to happen. It was asked if he was in favour of crushing and placing difficulties in the way of small denominations. He would not be in favour of crushing them in the sense of being oppressive, but he would be in favour of putting barriers in their way at the start. It seemed to be the glory of most Religious Bodies to point to the difficulties they had had at their start ; then why should not difficulties be put in the way of men who tried to make a new Nonconformist Body ? Let them earn their place, and then let privileges be conferred upon them. If the Bill applied to the Baptists, the Independents, the Presbyterians, and two or three others, then, when some other Religious Body could say it had gathered a large number of adherents about it and was strongly supported, it could come to the House and ask for a small Act to be passed including them within the scope of the Bill of the hon. Gentleman opposite. It might be said that such a thing was without precedent ; but, as an illustration, he supposed he might refer to that country in which education was found at its best—namely, Germany. What did they find in the German University ? Any graduate of any German University could, he thought, get appointed professor under the title of "private teacher," and was allowed to have a class in the University, but without any endowment at first. After a time, if he succeeded in gathering about him a sufficient number of pupils and students, and was successful in his teaching, he became at once endowed as a State Professor ; he had earned his right to a position and recognition by the State ; therefore, he held there were certain Nonconformist Religious Bodies that had earned their right to consideration by this House, and the other sects should be put upon the same terms. If his hon. Friends could meet him in this matter, he, for one, would offer no opposition to their Bill ; but he had felt it his duty to point out to them

*Mr. J. A. Rentoul*

as plainly as he could that they were doing the very worst thing they could do for Nonconformity when they were encouraging the increase of sects that already had reached the number of 250, the differences between the bulk of them being almost imperceptible. It was on the ground alone of the entire absence of any definition of the sects that were to be endowed that he moved that the Bill be read a second time this day six months.

Amendment proposed, to leave out the word "now," and at the end of the Question to add the words "upon this day six months."—(*Mr. Rentoul.*)

Question proposed, "That the word 'now' stand part of the Question."

MR. S. T. EVANS (Glamorgan, Mid) said, the hon. and learned Gentleman who had just addressed the House had not informed the House of one fact in connection with the Bill—namely, that two years ago, when he (Mr. Evans) had the honour of moving the Second Reading of this Bill, the hon. and learned Gentleman was one of its staunchest supporters.

MR. RENTOUL: I did mention that fact, and said that I supported the Bill in the past on the understanding that a definition of "Religious Bodies" would be adopted. I have not changed my opinions in the slightest degree.

MR. S. T. EVANS said, that a reference to the speech of the hon. Member on that occasion would show that he did not ask for any definition of the term "Religious Bodies" at all; and if it were necessary to take the hon. Member's arguments one by one, and to refute them, nothing would be easier than to take the hon. Member's speech which was delivered in the House two years ago. He wished to say at the commencement that, although his hon. Friend who moved the Second Reading of the Bill referred chiefly to Wales, the Bill was not applicable to Wales alone; it applied to the whole country; and because they brought forward instances from Wales, with which they were more closely acquainted, the House must not understand there were not equally strong cases in England also. He would refer to one case to show there was a necessity for compulsory legislation of the kind pro-

posed by this Bill. A chapel at Woolwich was built 30 years ago. The people could not get a site except at a rent of £13 a year for land only worth £1 a year, and a stipulation that at the end of 90 years it was to be handed over to the landlord in a complete state of repair. The people had to lay out £2,000 in obtaining a foundation, and then they built their church at a cost of £8,000; they had since spent a large amount of money upon it, and at the end of 60 years the landlord must be handed over his land, so that he would have received for 90 years a rent much in excess of that anyone else would have paid and at the end of the period obtain a property worth £10,000. That case was brought to the notice of the House two years ago by the hon. and learned Gentleman (Mr. Rentoul), who said he brought that particular case forward because it was the only church of which he had been a member in this country, and he thought the facts would have some weight with the House. Now, he might be allowed to point out that the House had passed the Second Reading of this Bill on two or three occasions. The hon. and learned Member objected to the absence of any definition of the words "Religious Bodies." His hon. and learned Friend had not defined or submitted any definition of those words. He (Mr. Evans) thought they would be easy to define; but there was a great objection to defining a Religious Body in a Bill, because it had been the policy of Parliament not to attempt any definition of Religious Bodies. He might refer to two or three Acts to show what the policy of Parliament had been in dealing with affairs of this kind. The policy of Parliament had been not to attempt any definition lest they might shut out some Body which ought to have the benefit of the Act. William IV., c. 30, entitled "An Act to Exempt from the Payment of Poor Rates Churches and other Places of Worship" was passed, but there was no definition in that Act. Another Act was the 13th & 14th Vic., c. 28, and the only other Act he would refer to was the 18th & 19th Vic., c. 81, and in none of these Acts was there any definition of Religious Bodies. Therefore, so far as they were concerned, they thought it would be a blot upon the Bill if they attempted a definition of Religious

Bodies. On the other hand, if the hon. and learned Gentleman could show it would be better to attempt a definition, he thought he was right in saying they would be prepared to consider the question; but that was a matter for Committee, and not for Second Reading, and was not a ground for moving the rejection of the Bill. In the second place, the hon. and learned Gentleman objected because the Bill gave compulsory powers, but in his speech two years ago he disposed of that objection. The hon. and learned Member was converted to the worship of the sacredness of contract, but two years ago he answered that by saying that a similar objection would apply to three-fourths of the Bills brought before the House. The third objection of the hon. and learned Member was that there was no precedent; but surely he could not argue that when there was now before the Statute Book an Act of Parliament enabling the Ecclesiastical Commissioners or those who build churches to acquire compulsorily—which this Bill did not attempt to do—land for the purpose of erecting a church upon it—[An hon. MEMBER: It is never used.] The Act was never used, that was true; but the argument of the hon. and learned Member was that there was no precedent. He could give the House very cogent reasons why that Act was never used, the chief one of which was that there was no difficulty in the Church of England to obtain grants of land from landlords as sites for places of worship. The fourth objection of his hon. and learned Friend was that they were by this Bill attempting to endow Religious Bodies. Again, he could answer the hon. Member from his own mouth, but he would not go into the details any further.

MR. RENTOUL: May I inform my hon. Friend that I answered that to-day—that I am in favour of endowment of Religious Bodies, but it is an argument that may be properly used against the Bill.

MR. S. T. EVANS could not understand his hon. and learned Friend putting up a bogey in order to knock it down again. He, for his part, disagreed entirely with the principle of endowing Religious Bodies; he was not in favour of that, and this Bill did not contain any proposal for the endowment of Religious Bodies at all. What was the meaning of religious endowment? It meant funds

given to the support of some Religious Body, and this Bill did nothing of the kind; they only asked for powers compulsorily to acquire land upon payment of the full value of the land. He wished to put before the House the case of one of the leading denominations in Wales—the Calvinistic Methodists. Their report for the year 1883 stated that 347 of their chapels had been built on leases, and that their total value at that time was £355,946. By the year 1900 7 per cent. of the leases would expire, the value of the chapels built under them being over £15,000. The leases expiring in 1925 represented 17 per cent. of the whole, the value of the chapels built on these leases being £45,000. The leases expiring in 1950 represented 29 per cent. of the whole, the value of the chapels being £94,000, thus the value of the chapels built in leases which must expire in the next 57 years was £154,618. The House, he considered, ought to provide some means to enable the Trustees of these places of worship to make it impossible for any landlord to forfeit these buildings at the end of a term. He had no hesitation in saying that the value of Nonconformist places of worship in Wales erected upon leases was over £1,000,000—he should think nearly £1,500,000. The hon. Member for East Down (Mr. Rentoul) in asking that Religious Bodies should be defined was asking the House to grant benefits to strong sects who were able to take care of themselves, and to leave out of the protection of Parliament and the privileges of this Bill the weaker Bodies that were not so well able to take care of themselves. The promoters of the Bill, however, sought to give the benefits to the weak as well as to the strong, and would not attempt to exclude any Religious Body from the privileges of the Bill. It might be said that although chapels were built on leasehold property, landlords did not, as a rule, take chapels into their own hands. If, however, hon. Members would refer to the columns of the newspapers they would find a case in Montgomeryshire where a lease was taken in 1859 for 99 years. Last year the Body worshipping in that chapel desired to extend and improve their place of worship, and in doing this they were prepared to spend £900. They had actually collected a sum of £700 to pay for the improvements, and what hap-

Mr. S. T. Evans

pened? A six months' notice to quit the premises was given by the landlady, Mrs. Seymour Davis, on the ground that it was a breach of the covenant in the lease to extend and improve the chapel. That notice to quit was still hanging over the heads of the congregation. This case showed that the powers of the landlords were used, if not to the fullest extent, at any rate to a fuller extent than they ought to be allowed to have the power of using. He hoped the Member for East Down would not put the House to the trouble of a Division, and that the House would by a unanimous voice pass the Second Reading of this Bill, which was brought forward as a measure of justice which ought to be granted.

MR. WILLOX (Liverpool, Everton) said, he did not propose to enter into the details of this Bill, but desired to call the attention of the House to the fact that on two former occasions its principle had been affirmed, after careful investigation, by a Select Committee of the House. The objections which had been raised by the hon. and learned Member (Mr. Rentoul) had reference rather to the details of the measure than to its principle. These details would be more properly considered in Committee—and many of them, according to his judgment, were of comparatively slight significance. On the point of the hon. Member that the practical effect of the Bill would be to endow Religious Bodies, even if it were so, it would be endowment of these Bodies by themselves at their own expense—and no practical obligation was imposed—either upon the State or upon the community, for the 11th clause stipulated that the annual rent-charge should be based on the market value at the time of the purchase of the reversion. Therefore, whatever increase of value might have taken place between the granting of the original lease and the exercise of the compulsory powers of purchase would go to the benefit of the landlord, and would have to be incurred at the expense of the lessees who desired to obtain the freehold of the place. The landlord would be still further indemnified from loss, as the law costs would have to be paid by those who set the law in motion. With regard to the argument that the effect of the Bill would be to multiply religious denominations, that was a matter with which they had very little

concern—and it was a matter which, whether good or not, could not be seriously affected by legislation. The third point to which the hon. and learned Member gave some prominence was that the powers were compulsory. But unless they were compulsory they would be practically inoperative. Without compulsion the powers that were now asked to be enforced were already in operation in principle. It was because the principle of voluntary agreement had not been effective that this legislation was rendered necessary; and while it had been suggested that the principle of that Bill had been affirmed, he would go further, and say that the whole policy of legislation during the last two generations had been in this direction, and also that that direction had been beneficial in the interests both of religion and of the community. The first point to be considered in reference to this Bill was as it affected the people, and next as it affected the landlords. As it affected the people they knew that all religious denominations were attached with very great sincerity and close affection to their places of worship, as regards the services in the church, the family associations that grew round it, and the denominational machinery that had its centre in it. That feeling had been held in great veneration by the members of the Church of England, and it seemed to him a most laudable and deserving sentiment that the Nonconformists should, if possible, be attached with equal permanence to their places of religious worship. As regarded the landlords, he had already shown that they would not be damaged by the passage of this measure. While prominence had been given to the matter as it affected agricultural districts, and chiefly the Principality of Wales, they must bear in mind that in many large towns, especially in the growing and populous parts of them, it was impossible to obtain freehold sites, from the fact that the whole of the estate that went into building use was leasehold. The Nonconformists in consequence were required to take what they could get and to accept the tenure that the chief landlord was willing to concede. That in many cases had involved, as he knew from his own experience, considerable hardship and the wrenching of old associations and great

family and religious ties. They had heard on many occasions alleged as a reproach to the Nonconformists that they deserted poor and worn-out parts of a town, and followed the people to the better residential districts. It seemed to him that the practical effect of this measure would be this—that as they gave the Nonconformist Bodies a closer and more permanent tenure of their chapels they would be anchored to the districts in which they had been originally established, and thus some corrective would be given of the practice now described as the migration of Dissenting Bodies. It had been said that the Bill would give to religious Bodies a power of capricious interference with private property, but they might have sufficient confidence in the tribunal to which the arbitration of this matter was to be referred to believe that that danger would be greatly minimised if not altogether averted. He thought it would be possible to make more clear the definition of a place of religious worship, and suggested that it should be confined to those places which had certificates of registration under the Solemnisation of Marriage Act. Whether that would be sufficiently comprehensive he did not know, but it seemed desirable that there should be some attempt at definition. There was also considerable vagueness in the definition of the relations between the landlord and the lessee, and the method of valuation and the terms of payment were also open to objection, inasmuch as an option was allowed to the lessee and not to the landlord. These were matters which touched rather the details and the minutiae of the clauses than the principle of the Bill. The principle was as sound now as it was last year and the year before. If it was not as perfect in operation as it might be, all Parties were concerned in making it more effective and more equitable, so that no injustice should be done to the landlord, while, at the same time, a sense of injustice would be removed from the Dissenting Bodies of the country.

\*MR. STANLEY LEIGHTON (Shropshire, Oswestry) reminded the House that this Bill did not affect Wales merely, but it affected the whole country, and it must therefore be judged by broader principles than would apply if it only affected a portion of the country. He did not think the hon. Gentleman who had promoted

this Bill had quite touched the true grounds upon which Dissenters might ask the House to give its assent to the Bill. They should not come there, as both the Mover and Seconder seemed to imply, *in formâ pauperis*, or with a plea *ad misericordiam*. The Protestant Dissenting Bodies had for years and years been accorded privileges, and had been treated in a very friendly way by the House of Commons. For the last two hundred years the Protestant Dissenting Bodies had been established by law and endowed to a large extent out of the taxes, and this was not by any means the first time they had come to the House of Commons to ask for further privileges, in order to give them increased establishment and endowment. The Nonconformists had every right to claim that the precedents long ago established in their favour should be followed now. They (the Dissenters) were rich, numerous, privileged; they were established and endowed, and they were owners of a large amount of national property. As far back as 1767, it was decided by a Judgment of Lord Mansfield in the House of Lords “that the Dissenters’ way of worship” was established as fully as that of the Church of England. There were innumerable Acts of Parliament in favour of their privileges; their chapels were certified and registered by Act of Parliament; by Act of Parliament marriages were solemnised in their chapels; their chapels were exempted from rates and taxes, as places of public worship, an endowment of £30,000 or £40,000 a year being given by that exemption at the present time; their ministers were relieved from serving civil offices; and they acquired sites for their chapels by Act of Parliament 45 and 46 Victoria. Again, by Act of Parliament their property had been especially exempted from the jurisdiction of the Charity Commission. The doctrine of the chapel was settled in cases of dispute by the State Courts, and by an Act passed at the beginning of this reign it was declared that the preaching for 25 years of any doctrine in a chapel established that doctrine, and thus a number of Presbyterian chapels were handed over to the Unitarians. Not only that, but they had been endowed out of the

taxes. He found from a return of the grants of public money for all religious denominations, that from 1721 up to 1852 grants of money were paid as pensions to Dissenting ministers every year, out of the taxes. Thus these established and endowed communities now came, according to precedent, to ask for further establishment, and further endowment. He would introduce no element of theological bitterness into this discussion. He did not look upon the Nonconformists as some Members looked upon the Church of England, as a religious body which it was a duty to revile. With the object of the Bill he to a certain extent agreed, and to that extent he should support it. But there was a great distinction between the object of the Bill and the means of carrying out its intention. And here it became necessary that they should have a definition of what was meant by a "religious body." He should wish to know to whom this Bill was to apply? Was it to apply to the Blackburn Psychological Society, to the Chevrah Torah Society, to the Church of Islam, to the Eclectics, to the Ethical Society, to the Humanitarians, to the Progressionists, to the Positivists, to the Secularists, to the Spiritualists, the Latter-Day Saints, and the Polygamists? All these religionists had places of worship which were certified by the Registrar General. He found there were 267 Societies altogether. Did the Member for Montgomeryshire intend to include all these different bodies, or, if not, which did he intend to exclude? Did he intend to exclude the Church of Islam and the mild Hindoo? The House wanted a definition of the words "religious bodies." In the Precedent of Sites Act, 45 and 46 Victoria, and 36 and 37 Victoria, the definition was not religious worship, but "Chapel, or place of Divine worship." How difficult it was to settle what Divine worship really was. The denomination called the Jumpers, jumped; the Ranters, ranted; the Quakers sat around in a peculiar costume, and for hours together said nothing at all; the Dervishes pirouetted; and the Moslems threw themselves down on the ground, while their Mollah, riding on a white ass, passed over their bodies. Did the promoters of the Bill intend to include all these religionists? There was an absolute necessity for a definition.

He was willing to admit that it might be for public utility that there should be further establishment and endowment of religious societies in this realm. It had been said that this was not a case of endowment. He knew it was not a case of endowment out of public funds, but it was endowment out of other people's pockets. It was not fair that the House of Commons should be asked to take money out of the pockets of certain men, as a matter of public policy, in order to hand it over to a society which they thought it was for public utility they should establish and endow. That was not according to precedent at all. For his part, he should like to see all places of religious worship made freeholds; but that was exactly what this Bill did not do. It created perpetual leaseholds. It did not enfranchise these places by making them freehold, but it proposed to make them perpetual leaseholds. Next, he should like some hon. Gentleman opposite to explain what they called pre-emption? The right of pre-emption, which was to be given to a landlord when a chapel ceased to be used for religious purposes, was the vaguest of all protection for the rights of property, for what guarantee was there that an excessive price would not be demanded? Then he should like to know whether the chapel, conveyed to trustees in consideration of a small perpetual rent-charge, was to be used exclusively for public religious worship or not? The precedent for these words was to be found in the Act of Parliament, 3rd and 4th William IV., which exempted all chapels from rates and taxes, provided they were used exclusively for public religious worship, and were certified for such religious worship. He had been told that a great many chapels and their appurtenances were used for other purposes, and not infrequently for boisterous political meetings. If these chapels which were to be handed over by this Bill from the lessor to the lessee for religious purposes were to be used for other than religious purposes, he thought the question of public utility fell to the ground altogether, and he hoped, therefore, if they passed this Bill they would restrict the objects of their bounty to purposes of religion. For his part he preferred freehold to leasehold, and the title of the Bill commended



itself very much to him on the ground that these leaseholds were to be turned into freeholds, for in that way they would get rid of all the difficulty of the unearned increment. The owners of the chapel would then be the absolute owners; all the unearned increment would come to them, and there would be no confusion between the rights of the lessor and lessee, and they would be really and truly enfranchised. But the Bill contemplated the retention of the lease, and not the settlement of the matter by a money payment once for all. He did not like the idea of lessors holding their hands, as it were, over the chapel by having a rent-charge. The question of pre-emption was very important, and he should like to have some explanation of how they would prevent the speculator from using the Bill for purposes of his own? Persons might go in as a religious body, obtain a lease, then enfranchise under the Bill, and then make a profit out of the freehold. He was glad the promoters of the Bill had discovered the advantage of a preamble. They knew now from the Prime Minister that the preamble was the most important part of a Bill. He would suggest that the preamble of the present Bill should run thus: "Whereas it is expedient to provide by law for the more effectual establishment and endowment of certain ecclesiastical communities in Great Britain and Ireland, and to give increased facilities for public religious worship, be it enacted, &c." If hon. Gentlemen would agree to such preamble, and put to rights those points in the Bill which were defective, for his part he should be happy to give every possible support to the measure.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. ASQUITH, Fife, E.): The supporters of the Bill may well congratulate themselves on the character of the arguments which have been advanced against the Bill. I have followed with all possible care the speech of the hon. Gentleman who has just sat down, and I confess myself entirely at a loss to appreciate the grounds upon which he is going to base his opposition—if, indeed, he is going to oppose the Second Reading of the Bill. The hon. Gentleman has given us a new definition both of establishment and endowment. It appears,

in his view, a religious sect is established when the law protects them in the enjoyment of their property, and when it extends to their places of worship the same immunity or qualified immunity from taxation and rating which is given to every charitable institution in the country. The hon. Gentleman appears to be of opinion that Parliament has endowed a religious body when it enables the trustees to hold property for religious purposes, and to pay out of their own pockets the value of the reversion of their lease. The hon. Gentleman was kind enough to admit this was not an endowment out of public funds. Out of whose funds is it an endowment? Out of the funds of the religious body which is required to make the payment. In other words, the House, when it passes this Bill—as I trust it will pass it—will be simply giving these religious bodies the power of acquiring for themselves that which every humane and reasonable landlord would give them without the necessity of the intervention of an Act of Parliament—namely, protection against confiscation and security of tenure—a privilege which, I may remind the hon. Gentleman, the Church of England already possesses. The only argument against the Bill is founded upon the absence of a definition in the interpretation clause of the term "religious body." The hon. and learned Gentleman who moved the rejection of the Bill appears to have had in his mind some graduated scale of the religious bodies of the country, according to the degrees of the responsibility and authority which they possess. I should be very sorry to see Parliament classifying religious bodies, and my answer to him and to the hon. Gentleman who has just sat down is this: If the question should arise, the Courts of Law are perfectly capable of interpreting what is a "religious body" and what are "religious purposes," and fantastic cases of imaginary abuses, which he and the hon. Gentleman who moved the rejection of the Bill have been at so much pains and ingenuity to invent, are cases which, when they arise, the Courts of Law would be perfectly competent to deal with. There is not the slightest risk in the world of the powers given by this Bill being used for any other purpose, or by any other body, than for religious purposes and by a religious body.

**MR. STANLEY LEIGHTON:** How about political meetings?

**MR. ASQUITH:** The hon. Member is very much shocked that some of the chapels in the country, and in Wales I suppose more particularly, should from time to time be used for the purposes of political meetings. Well, Sir, I do not think there is anybody who is desirous that chapels should be habitually used for such purposes. But why are chapels used for political meetings? I will tell the hon. Gentleman why they are so used. Because the schoolroom of the parish, made and maintained out of public funds, is too often in the hands of an irresponsible body of managers who will only allow it to be used for the purposes of one political Party. If the hon. Gentleman will agree with the proposals which the Government are going to make, and which I trust the House will assent to, to secure that these places, whether they are built at the public expense, or whether they are only maintained or contributed to at the public expense, that these buildings shall be freely available for legitimate public meetings, then I can assure him that the chapels to which this Bill applies are not in future likely to be resorted to. There was one other argument which the hon. Gentleman alluded to, and to which it may be worth while to refer in one sentence. His argument was based on the clause which deals with pre-emption. I confess it appears to me the hon. Gentleman did not understand the meaning and effect of that. As I understand it it is this: If at any time after the reversion has been conveyed under this Act to the trustees, who now own the fee simple, they should wish to sell it or use it for other purposes than those defined by the Act, then both justice and equity require that the first offer should be made to the original vendor, and that he should have the right to re-acquire the property at a fair price—this price to be fixed in the same way as the original rent-charge. The same machinery that the Act provides for the assessment of the original rent-charge is brought into requisition for the pre-emption, therefore any hardship or injustice is removed. On behalf of the Government I have to say that we most heartily support the Second Reading of the Bill, and for my part I confess I am

somewhat surprised at the moderation of the proposal. I think the facts brought forward in evidence before the Select Committee, and on which their recommendations are founded, might have justified the introduction of a much more drastic measure which would have enabled the religious communities of the country to acquire compulsorily in all cases, at a fair price, such sites as they needed for carrying on their places of worship. This measure is a good measure founded on the unanimous recommendation of the Committee. Twice, I think, it has received the assent of the House of Commons in which the Tory Party was in a majority, and I trust, after the ample discussion it has undergone in previous years and on the present occasion, that the House will speedily give it a Second Reading and send it to the Grand Committee on Law.

**\*MR. STUART WORTLEY** (Sheffield, Hallam): The speech of the right hon. Gentleman who has just sat down was not of a character to promote speediness in the decision of the House. I rise as one of those who have long desired that some reasonable compromise should be come to on this question, but I am bound to say that if hon. Gentlemen wished this question to be settled at an early period they should entrust the advocacy of the measure to different hands. They should not make it the subject of the introduction of inflammatory matter, of highly-coloured descriptions of institutions, which are really addressed to hearers outside the House, and not to the pure reason which ought to guide the decisions of the House. I have said that I am anxious to see a fair settlement of this question, and I think that substantial evidence has been given that that desire is not confined to myself on this side of the House. It seems to me there are certain things which may be fairly claimed by those who promote the Bill. It seems to me that it you have a substantial body of persons *bonâ fide* devoted to the exercise of religious worship according to their own doctrines, public policy might in some cases require that they should obtain a reasonable security of tenure and a reasonable means of realising the value of such expenditure as they had put on the property. On the other hand, what is it fair that the owner of property should require? There

are certain things which the landlord has an equitable right to secure. It is not necessary that a Religious Body should ask to take away from the landlord his fixed security for his rent upon the land; and I am glad to see that the Bill, by proposing the creation of rent charges, does not ask more than was reasonable in that respect. The landlord has a right to see that if there is a change of ownership, if there is a cessation in the permanency and vigour of a religious Body, his original rights to the property should revert either by right of pre-emption or otherwise. The landlord has a right to claim that the land compulsorily taken from him should be used for the sole and exclusive purposes of the religious Body, and that if these purposes ceased, his rights should revert. There should be another provision that the landlord should not have created in the midst of his property, what the hon. Gentleman promoting this Bill would call an oasis, and what the landlord would call an Alsatia, and that to prevent that, he should have the benefit—as against the newly-enfranchised lessees or the persons subject to the new rent charge—the benefit of such restrictive covenants as originally bound them when they were under the terms of the lease. The question before the House is really whether this Bill, with a reasonable amount of security, effects these objects. Really, it is the Government who have the control of this question; and it is because they have control of it that I regret the tone of the speech of the right hon. Gentleman who has just sat down. We know that the relations between the Government and hon. Gentlemen representing Welsh constituencies, according to rumour, are in a somewhat delicate state. It may be that the Government have lost the power of controlling the action of the Welsh Members, but the loss of that power does not discharge them of responsibility, and if the Government will really lend its powerful aid towards a reasonable settlement of this question, I believe such a settlement will be promoted largely by hon. Gentlemen sitting on this (Opposition) side of the House. It has been said there ought to be a definition of religious Bodies, and what I have said goes to show that I think

security ought to be taken that the Religious Body should be of a more or less permanent kind, and that if this permanence ceased, then the rights acquired under the Bill should revert to those from whom they were taken. I want somebody on the part of the Government to tell the House that some words will be inserted which, for the purpose of defining Religious Bodies, will supply effective guidance to the County Court Judge as to the way in which he is to construe the trust deeds, because it is on the construction of the trust deeds that the right to this extraordinary intervention of the law must in the long run depend. If the trust is either exhausted by the cessation of the existence of the Religious Body, or if the Religious Body seeks to direct its energies towards objects other than those contemplated by the original terms of the trust, we want to know do the Government really mean that in that case they should continue to exercise the extraordinary rights conferred upon them by the Bill now before the House? Although some highly-coloured descriptions of strongly controversial matters were imported into this Debate which need not have been imported, and although we are asked to base our assent to this Bill on the extremely imperfect security that somewhere in the recesses of their minds the Government have the sketch of some Bill to deal with certain voluntary institutions, of which the right hon. Gentleman imperfectly understood the status, yet I am bound to say that I do wish to see some reasonable settlement of this question; and if the Government can give us anything like an assurance upon some of the points I have raised—namely, that they will effectively aid and guide this Committee in arriving at a satisfactory settlement of all the questions to which I have referred, which shall practically give effect to the principles for which I have contended, I myself should not ask or advise that any gentleman on this side of the House should offer any uncompromising opposition to this Bill.

\*Mr. PERKS (Lincolnshire, Louth), said he entirely concurred with the hon. Gentleman in expressing the hope that in dealing with this question which so intimately concerned—

Notice taken, that 40 Members were not present; House counted, and 40 Members being found present.

MR. PERKS said, he concurred in the remarks made by the last speaker that in dealing with the question which so closely concerned, not merely Welsh Nonconformity, but English Nonconformity, they should endeavour to discuss the question and legislate upon it without asperity or harshness or too much ecclesiastical bias. This was not the first time, and perhaps it would not be the last, when the duty of clearing the way in favour of some religious or social reform would have been undertaken by his hon. Friends from Wales. But he would venture to point out to the House that while the question undoubtedly affected Wales most seriously—for two reasons; firstly, that the nation was as a whole Nonconformist; and, secondly, that the land was largely, if not chiefly, in the hands of Churchmen—yet the figures as to the relative strength of Nonconformity in England and Wales showed that the question affected already, and probably in the future would more thoroughly affect, English than Welsh Nonconformity. He had been entertained, as he supposed most Members of the House were entertained, by that specimen of agile change of opinion which the hon. Member who moved the rejection of the Bill had manifested. He had wondered how it was that the hon. Member had seemed to have lost all faith in Nonconformity. Perhaps some explanation might arise in the fact that during the two last years he had made the acquaintance of Nonconformists in all parts of England, and did not trust them or their opinions as he did two years ago. The right hon. Gentleman the President of the Local Government Board in the year 1882 obtained from Parliament some very important Returns. The hon. Member representing the Oswestry Division of Shropshire (Mr. Stanley Leighton) by the aid of *Whitaker's Almanack* amused himself and the House by reading out a number of very insignificant sects with peculiar titles whom he did not consider entitled to statutory recognition. But the Returns obtained by the right hon. Gentleman the President of the Local Government Board ten years ago showed that Nonconformity in this

country was substantially divided up between six or seven powerful and effective sects. That Return showed that out of a total number of 21,000 places of worship registered in connection with Nonconformity, no less than 12,360 belonged to the various Methodist Bodies, 2,600 to the Independents, 2,600 to the Baptists, 824 to the Roman Catholics, 271 to the Presbyterians in England, and the residue of 2,132 was divided up, it was true, over a multitude of sects, some of them very small, and, from the hon. Member's point of view, apparently insignificant. But this residue included the powerful body of Jews, the Unitarians, and Friends. The Wesleyan body alone during 30 years had spent £9,000,000 on church property in this country; and this money had been subscribed, not in the way of endowment, though some people might call it so. To refer to cases where hardship had occurred, he would remind the House of the Park Chapel in Sheffield. Thousands of pounds had been spent on that chapel by the Wesleyan Methodists, who held it under an old lease from the Duke of Norfolk, at a ground-rent of £8 16s. a year. When the lease was about to expire a proposal was made by the Duke of Norfolk for renewal, but those interested in the chapel could not accept the terms, and one day they were surprised to see an advertisement in the papers offering the chapel for sale on the expiration of the lease. It became necessary to negotiate with His Grace, and ultimately the chapel authorities had to pay £2,800 for the purchase of the reversion of the premises, and the conversion of the leasehold into a freehold title. In the City of London there was a chapel held from one of the great City Companies. The ground-rent was £48 a year. The Wesleys took the site, in 1843, for 50 years, and, very probably, spent £6,000 in erecting a chapel on it. When the lease expired the chapel authorities found it impossible to pay the high rent asked by the City Company, and the premises had to be vacated. That ground was now let for £650 a year. The result had been the total extinction of the Wesleyan community in the City of London. The inability to purchase reversionary interests, and to convert leaseholds into freeholds, had had this unfortunate effect on trust property held

for religious purposes: when the term of a lease was very nearly expiring, trustees were unwilling to spend money in enlarging, repairing, or improving, and this was especially unfortunate in the matter of Sunday Schools. There were 2,000,000 of children in the Sunday schools of the Wesleyan Methodists, and it was very desirable that those schools should be well lighted and fitted with modern appliances, but it was impossible to do this when the premises were held under leasehold tenures, especially at the fag-end of the leases. The House, he supposed, would agree that it was desirable that places of worship and schools should be erected where it was most convenient for the community that they should be placed, but the Nonconformists frequently had to accept very inferior sites simply because they preferred freehold to leasehold. They also had to agree at times to most onerous conditions, which were laid down by land owners. In one case in the Midlands, at a place where people were in the habit of going to recruit their health, a Nonconformist chapel of a highly ornate description had been built and the service carried on in it closely approximate to that of the Church of England, this state of things being due to the conditions contained in the lease. Nonconformists did not wish to appropriate the property of lessors, but they asked that machinery might be provided by which they could convert leaseholds into freeholds. Under the present Bill it would be provided that where the parties did not agree a perpetual ground-rent should take the place of the present terminable ground-rent. Perhaps on this point the promoters of the Bill might be open to accept some improvement. He admitted that so far as the Wesleyan Body was concerned, it was desirable not that they should have these perpetual ground-rents, but that they should be able to convert their leaseholds into freeholds, untrammelled by any leasehold conditions whatever. He rested this case on the plea of public utility. The late Home Secretary had said that this measure was indefensible, except on two grounds—first, that the landlords would not part with their land except upon compulsion, and, secondly, public utility. His plea was the last named. Hon. Members might differ as to the theological

*Mr. Perks*

principles which might be propounded in these places of worship. An hon. Member opposite objected to the doctrines of Islam. He (Mr. Perks) had no sympathy with those doctrines, but he held that if a sufficient number of Mahomedans had a place of worship in this country they were as much entitled to consideration in regard to the enfranchisement of their place of worship as the hon. Member and a number of his co-religionists would be if they built a church.

MR. STANLEY LEIGHTON said he did not object to the claims of those professing Islamism being considered. He had only pointed out that this was a question to be borne in mind.

MR. PERKS said he was glad to see that the hon. Member's views were broadening. They must not forget that in these Nonconformist sanctuaries, over 20,000 in number, principles of industry, sobriety, thrift, humanity, and toleration, were inculcated. Gentlemen who were members of the Church of England knew perfectly well that no dual landlord could interfere with their churches, and the Nonconformists asked to have, through this Bill, the same incentives to devotion and self-sacrifice that hon. Gentlemen opposite possessed.

\*MR. LEES KNOWLES (Salford, W.) said that, so far as he was concerned, if the Second Reading were carried to a division he should give the Bill his support, though he agreed with the hon. Member for Shropshire (Mr. Stanley Leighton) in not altogether liking the manner in which it was sought to carry out its objects. The right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary had said that the Bill would carry out the recommendations of the Select Committee. There he (Mr. Knowles) would join issue with him. He did not think that the Bill would carry out the recommendations of the Select Committee, and if the House would refer to the paragraph of the Report of the Committee which dealt with this subject it would be seen that the view he took was the correct one. This paragraph said—

"There has been a considerable amount of evidence given from some parts of the country of the difficulty experienced by Nonconformist bodies in obtaining a secure tenure of their places of worship, and schools connected with them, and of this being frequently felt to be a great hardship. The Committee think that it is most desirable on public grounds that

all religious bodies should be enabled to obtain a secure tenure of such places of worship and schools, and they consider that the freeholder who has granted land for such a purpose has no good reason to object to its being so held in perpetuity, on his receiving the value of his interest. They, therefore, recommend that all religious bodies to whom land has been granted on lease by the freeholder for the erection of their places of worship and schools should be empowered to purchase the fee, subject to the payment of fair compensation."

He differed from the Home Secretary when he said that the Bill carried out the recommendations of the Committee, and he would call his attention to the words "so" and also to the words "granted on lease by the freeholder." He wished to say a word in support of his hon. Friend below the Gangway, the Member for East Down (Mr. Rentoul), who moved in opposition to the Bill. The hon. Gentleman was found fault with by the hon. Member for Glamorganshire because in the year before last he gave it his support, and this year he said he could no longer do so for the reason that the pledge given to the House on the former occasion had not, in his view, been carried out in the Bill. He (Mr. Knowles) felt himself somewhat in the same position as his hon. Friend, because he remembered that a pledge had been given to him (Mr. Knowles) across the floor of the House just before the division, which pledge, however, was not reported in *Hansard*, though he remembered it. The pledge was that a Reverter Clause should be introduced into the Bill in Committee. The Bill never was in Committee, and the clause never was introduced, but there was no such clause in the present Bill. If this Bill should get into Committee, he (Mr. Knowles) proposed to move—and he should give his support to the Second Reading on the assumption that such a clause would be inserted in Committee—a clause for reverter as follows:—

"Provided that, upon the said land so granted as aforesaid or any part thereof ceasing to be used for the purposes of the religious body, the trustees whereof are desirous of acquiring the fee simple in pursuance of this Act, the same shall thereupon immediately revert to and become a portion of the estate of the aforesaid lessor or owner as fully to all intents and purposes as if this Act had not been passed, anything herein contained to the contrary notwithstanding."

There was a precedent for such a Reverter Clause in the School Sites Act,

1841—4th and 5th Vict., Chap. 38, Sec. 2. He was sorry that the speeches made from the other side of the House should have been, to some extent, polemical, because it made it necessary for gentlemen who had a knowledge of the facts stated to give their view of those facts and the rebutting evidence. Allusion had been made to the demolition of chapels in the Metropolis by the hon. Member for the Louth Division of Lincolnshire; but such demolition—which had taken place in the case of churches as well as chapels—proved only that buildings had been destroyed in districts where through the migration of the residential population they had become useless, and he felt that when landlords were being attacked—although he himself had no special interest in the subject—some one should stand up and defend them. He held in his hand a letter written by the solicitor to the Duke of Westminster relating to this Bill. He said—

"I think it will be as well if you inform some of our friends in the House of Commons (by way of illustration that ground-landlords are not unwilling to provide sites) that the Duke of Westminster has presented to the Trustees of the Congregational Union a very fine freehold site in Duke Street, Grosvenor Square, upon which they have built a Congregational Chapel. They had to vacate a very inferior site in Robert Street, close by, because the lease expired; which, of course, was held at a rent. The Marquis of Northampton also, a few years ago, sold the freehold of the Union Chapel, Compton Terrace, to the Congregationalists at a fair price, they having previously held a lease at a rent."

So, at all events, there was some rebutting evidence with regard to the alleged harshness on the part of the landlords. And with regard to that Duke Street Chapel, to which he had alluded, he held in his hand a copy of a letter of thanks from the solicitors to the trustees of the chapel to this effect—

"The trustees at their meeting here to day" (14th July, 1892) "desired us to acknowledge your letter to us of the 8th inst., and beg that you will convey to His Grace the Duke of Westminster their unanimous thanks for the added proof of his generosity afforded by his offer [to present the freehold site], and their grateful acceptance of such offer."

That was evidence on the part of the landlords. Now, he should like for a moment to refer to the Welsh cases to which allusion had been made. During the past week a letter had been circu-

lated in the newspapers, signed by Mr. H. L. W. Lawson, Mr. O. V. Morgan, Mr. Howard Evans, and Mr. James Rowlands, whose names would be familiar to the House as Members or ex-Members of Parliament. In promoting the interests of this Bill these gentlemen had circulated a letter in which they had alluded to the Welsh cases. They referred to the Blaenau Festiniog case, the Sheffield case, and two other cases. As he was a Member of the Select Committee which inquired into those cases, the facts were fresh in his mind. What he objected to with regard to the statements in the letter and the statements made in the course of the debate was that they were one-sided and *ex parte*. Only the cases of the tenants were given, and that being so he thought it was the duty of some Member to say a word from the landlord's point of view. He proposed to refer briefly to the Blaenau Festiniog and the Sheffield cases. One of the witnesses before the Select Committee on Town Holdings was Colonel the Hon. W. Sackville-West, agent of Lord Penrhyn, whose evidence could be found in the Blue Book, and he would quote a digest of his evidence from the landlord's point of view. The digest was as follows:—

"There were 27 chapels on Lord Penrhyn's estates, mostly held on 30-years' leases; but of late 3 had been built on 60-years' terms. In three cases the 30-years' leases had expired. In two cases they had been renewed. In the other case the occupancy was continued at the same rent—namely, £1, and he had had no application for a lease. One chapel in Llandegai Parish was re-let for 30 years at a slightly increased ground rent, but Lord Penrhyn gave £300 to build a minister's house, and pays the rates on an annual value increased by his own expenditure. The other was the Jerusalem Chapel at Bethesda, the site of which—about an acre and a quarter, in the centre of Bethesda—had been held since 1842 at £1 ground-rent. The site was now the most valuable building land in Bethesda, and when the lease expired in 1872 could have been let for building at £50 a year. Still the lease was renewed in 1872 for 30 years, at the old ground rent of £1 a year. Then he quotes an instance of a minister's house in Llandegai—a parish in which Lord Penrhyn pays all rates. The ground rent received from this house is £1; the rates paid by Lord Penrhyn are £1 5s. Again, while this evidence was being given, Lord Penrhyn was considering whether he could accede to an application by the Calvinistic Methodists for the purchase of the reversion on the lease of their chapel. He would be willing to sell for a small sum, but there would be no security that the site so sold

might not be diverted to other purposes. 'The oldest chapel in Bangor,' he said, 'is now a stable.' He further explained that the real reason why landowners prefer to let chapel property on lease, instead of selling the freehold, is the guarantee which a lease affords against the conversion of such property to other uses and against detriment to their adjoining property. In the case of a church they know that the property can be used for only one purpose, and will be permanently used for that purpose and no other."

MR. J. ROWLANDS (Finsbury, E.): May I ask you prepared that Digest?

MR. KNOWLES said it had been prepared by two friends of his—Mr. Charles Henry Sargent, a distinguished barrister, of Lincoln's Inn, and Mr. James Gray, a distinguished solicitor, also practising in Lincoln's Inn, and it had been checked by himself. He could give the hon. Member the references to all the details of the evidence in the Report of the Committee. The Digest continued—

"With regard to the covenant in Lord Penrhyn's leases against using chapels for other than religious purposes, he stated that it had never, to his knowledge, been enforced, and he considered that the only reason why chapels were not sold in fee was that covenants in restraint of user would not apply to the freehold. It had also to be borne in mind that what Dissenters desired was freehold chapels for much less than their market value, with power to convert them to uses which might cause considerable detriment to the rest of an estate. His reason for granting 60, instead of 99, years' terms for chapels was that the reversion to a chapel was valueless, and he also contemplated the value of a reversion in fixing a ground-rent. Had the buildings been valuable for other purposes, he would not object to grant a longer term. On Mr. Asheton Smith's Vaynol estate, he added, there were about 15 chapels and several Nonconformist schools. The sites of a few had been presented, and a few sold; but most were held on 99-years' leases at 1s. ground rent. Similarly, on Mr. Ellis Nanney's estate, near Criccieth, there were 4 chapel leases, three held at 5s., one at 10s. a year. Renewals for 60 years had just been offered there, more land being added free of charge, and the 10s. ground-rent reduced to 5s. His information did not extend to other estates."

He thought these things were worthy of consideration as rebutting evidence against those who alleged harshness on the part of the landlords with regard to granting leases for chapels in Wales. A still stronger case was that respecting Sheffield, to which the hon. Member for the South Division (Mr. Perks) had alluded. The hon. Member had given the House an *ex parte* statement based on the evidence of the witnesses brought before the Committee by the Welsh

Mr. Lees Knowles

Members or their friends, and he (Mr. Knowles) would like to produce the rebutting evidence presented to the Committee on behalf of the landlords, and particularly on behalf of the Duke of Norfolk. Three witnesses came before the Committee. There was a Mr. Simpson, a solicitor; Mr. Clegg, the Mayor; and Mr. Ellison, the agent of the Duke of Norfolk. From the evidence of these three gentlemen it appeared that three-fourths of the town of Sheffield was leasehold, let for terms of from 99 to 999 years, and one-fourth freehold, and that the Duke of Norfolk, the principal owner, and the Church Burgesses and Town Trustees, let for terms of 99 years, while other estates were let for terms of 200, 300, 500, and 800 years. The Sheffield case, put concisely from the landlord's point of view, was as follows. He again quoted from the Digest—

"The Wesleyan Chapel, Duke Street Park, said Mr. Simpson and Mr. Clegg, was held at a ground-rent of £8 16s. In 1880 the trustees applied for a renewal to the Duke of Norfolk, who asked £100 a year, and that the current lease, with 12 or 14 years to run, should be surrendered. 'That comes to this,' said Mr. Simpson, 'that they would have been paying £100 a year for 14 years, less the £8 16s. they had contracted to pay,' or £1,500 which, in his opinion, was more than the value of the chapel itself. The offer, added Mr. Clegg, was declined, and no other site for a chapel can be had on the Park estate. Mr. Ellison's version of the matter was simple:—'Besides the chapel itself there are two schools with two dwelling-houses under, a caretaker's house, and three old cottages, covering an area of 2,455 square yards, all comprised in the lease. Had this ground been in the Duke's control as vacant land when the lessees applied for an extended term, I believe I could have let it at 2s. 6d. per yard, or £306 17s. 6d. per annum, irrespective of any buildings thereon; whereas I offered a renewal lease of 2,100 square yards, with a right of road over adjoining land, for 50 years, at a rent of £100.'"

He thought that this evidence, at all events, gave a different complexion to the cases referred to in the House. With regard to the Bill itself, there were a good many objections to the different clauses. His hon. Friend the Member for East Down (Mr. Rentoul) had called attention to the fact that there was no definition of a religious body. There was no definition of a place of worship. It was a very easy thing to obtain registration as a Religious Body, and all sorts of curious places were used by different sects as places of worship. According to a Registrar

General's list, the certified places included a subscription reading-room, a loft, railway arches, a club room, a cottage, a "Noah's Ark," a Royal Amphitheatre, and a Gladstone Music Hall. As had already been pointed out, he believed, there ought to be some stipulation in the Bill with regard to the number of members which might be regarded as sufficient to constitute a religious body. It seemed to him ridiculous that half-a-dozen members should club together and so effect enfranchisement under the Bill. There ought also, he thought, to be a certain number of years in the lease to run. Mr. Lawson, in his Leasehold Enfranchisement Bill, proposed that a tenant who held a lease with 20 years to run should be at liberty to obtain enfranchisement. He could conceive a landlord making provision for the falling in a lease so that when it fell in the whole of the property might be dealt with in a large-handed manner. Supposing there had been a chapel standing at the corner of Charles Street, Berkeley Square, where a noble Duke had lately been making some great improvements, how could he have dealt with the property in a large-handed way? How could he have pulled down the old buildings in order to rebuild with all the modern improvements and widened streets? Objection had also been taken to the Bill with regard to its provisions on the subject of underleases. The Bill would enable any lessee to expropriate the freeholder by subletting the property to the trustees of any Religious Body. The Town Holdings Committee never contemplated such a thing as that. In their Report they said that with regard to enfranchisement any such powers must "in fairness" be coupled with provisions—

"To secure the reversioner both the value of his property and *compensation for injury he may sustain by its being taken from him, and the expenses which he may necessarily incur.*"

The Committee's recommendation with regard to places of worship referred only to cases in which "land has been *granted on lease by the freeholder.*" He was afraid that when one of these estates was converted there would be some difficulty with regard to the covenants. This difficulty was suggested before the Town Holdings Committee. Mr. Parry, one of the Welsh witnesses, was questioned by



Mr. Heath with regard to sanitary covenants (Questions 6299—6301). The witness said—

“I was asked whether certain improvements which had been carried out at Llandudno were carried out by the landlord or at the expense of the ratepayers, and I said at the expense of the ratepayers.

“Q. Mr. Lawson asked you a question as to the sanitary condition, and you said that under the new leases the sanitary covenants were carried out, but under the old leases there had been some difficulty?—A. I referred to Bethesda then. I referred to my own district, not to Llandudno.

“Q. Why were these sanitary covenants not carried out under the old leases?—A. Because the leases in a great number of cases then were drawn out by illiterate men—simply a rough paper with no proper conditions whatever that the landlord could take advantage of to compel them.

“Q. He could not enforce them?—A. That is so.”

It appeared to him that if these places were enfranchised at the present time, and the old covenants still held good—freehold being then subject to covenants—it would be found that some of the old conditions would not promote the well-being, and particularly the sanitary well-being, of certain districts. It seemed to him, also, that if the House were going to enable the trustees of Religious Bodies to go to the landlord and compel him to let them have a freehold, it would not be unreasonable to insert in the Bill a provision arranging, conversely, that the landlord should be able to go to a Religious Body and compel it to enfranchise the site of its chapel or meeting house. He did not think that what was sauce for the goose should not also be sauce for the gander. It had been said by several of the witnesses examined before the Town Holdings Committee that the payment of rent for these sites was a stigma upon religion. He could never understand it himself, and he used to say to the witnesses—“In churches we pay pew rents, and we don't consider it a stigma upon religion.” He did not consider the payment of rents was a stigma upon religion any more than the payment of pew rents or payment to a collection. Then there was the question of mortgages, with regard to which he saw many difficulties that would arise under the Bill. A large sum of money was at the present time invested by Assurance Societies in the security of these buildings.

*Mr. Knowles*

According to the Report of the Star Life Assurance Society for 1892 the total sum then outstanding of the money advanced by that Society to different Religious Bodies—Wesleyan Methodist, Methodist, Congregational, and Baptist—was £205,000. Interest was paid by these Religious Bodies in respect to these mortgages, and he did not see how the payment of rent could be a stigma upon religion any more than the payment of that interest to the Assurance Societies or the payment of a lump sum. He was in favour of legislation for the enfranchisement of these places of worship, and he had always said so, and the only difference of opinion between him and the promoters of the Bill was as to the means for effecting the object proposed by the Bill. It seemed to him to be a sensible suggestion that the Bill should be made to form a part of the Welsh Suspensory Bill which would be before the House in a few days, or, as it dealt with a subsidiary question, it might very well be postponed until the big question of the Disestablishment of the Church in England and Wales was decided. Whatever happened, he hoped that the Bill would not be referred to a Standing Committee, because if it were referred to a Standing Committee, they would not be able to discuss the details of the Bill, as they would otherwise be—in fact, the Committee stage of the House would be avoided, and hon. Members would not have sufficient opportunity for enforcing their opinions on the Bill. He should say candidly that he considered the Bill was to some extent part of a larger scheme of legislation. The questions it raised were of a social and a socialistic character. It was the first step towards that absolute leasehold enfranchisement, which hon. Members who promoted the Bill had so keenly at heart. But he had the deepest sympathy with Dissenters; he had helped Dissenters in every possible way in his own constituency, and as a Member of the Select Committee on Town Holdings, which had unanimously recommended the object contended for in the Bill, he gave his support to the Second Reading of the Bill, though he did not pledge himself to the action he would take when it passed into the Committee.

\*SIR G. OSBORNE MORGAN (Denbighshire, E.) pointed out that, with very few exceptions, every Member who had tried to pick holes in the Bill had ended his speech by declaring himself in its favour. He had only one objection to the Bill, and that was that it did not go far enough. Twenty-three years ago he had had the honour of bringing before the House, and carrying through Second Reading, a Bill much more elastic in character than the present Bill, for it proposed to give power to the trustees of Religious Bodies in every case to acquire land for their purposes. The present Bill merely dealt with land already devoted to religious purposes, and it came before the House backed by an amount of authority such as few Bills rarely possessed. It had not only got in its favour the unanimous finding of the Town Holdings Committee, but in the last Parliament, which was very much less Liberal than this, its Second Reading was carried by an overwhelming majority—a majority absolutely of two to one. The hon. Member for East Down (Mr. Rentoul), who had moved the rejection of the Bill, had made for a Nonconformist a most extraordinary speech. The hon. Member had said that it was not desirable to encourage the creation of weak religious bodies. But all the strong religious bodies now in existence were weak once, and surely the weak religious bodies were the bodies they should endeavour to protect. Why, some 1850 years ago there was a weak religious body which numbered not much more than 12 persons, and he wondered what would have become of the world if that weak religious body had not been allowed to meet in that Upper Chamber in Jerusalem. The hon. Member seemed also to have forgotten the saying of Scripture, "Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them." Another objection to the Bill was that it practically established and endowed the Nonconformist Bodies. But were they to be told that it was endowing the religious bodies to enable them to buy land with their own money. The use of such an argument was really trifling with the time of the House. The other objections which had been raised did not affect the principle of the Bill—they dealt merely with its details. It had been said that there was

no definition of "religious bodies" in the Bill. Why should such a definition be inserted when it was not required? He believed they already had a judicial decision as to the meaning of a "religious body," and if they had not it was easy for the Judges to give such a decision. However, the phrases "religious body" and "religious worship" had been introduced over and over again into Acts of Parliament. They were contained in the Burials Act, which he had carried through the House. It had been said that no case had been made out for the Bill. Half a dozen cases had been made out. The House should remember that it was not easy for religious bodies so circumstanced to make out cases, and it was not always advisable to instance facts which might provoke retaliation on the part of those whose conduct was called into question. If the landlords were generous, if they recognised that property had its duties as well as its rights, they would not be touched by the Bill, but if on the other hand they were selfish or cantankerous a Bill of this kind was wanted to bring them to their senses.

\*VISCOUNT CRANBORNE (Rochester), said he desired to speak with the greatest respect of the Nonconformist Bodies of the country, and he wished as strongly as any Member of the House that they should have full opportunity of pursuing the worship of God according to their own consciences. But he ventured to remind the House that no argument worthy of mention had been brought forward in favour of the Bill. Even the Home Secretary had said nothing in favour of the Bill. The right hon. Gentleman had declared that the Courts of Law would have no difficulty in interpreting the clauses of the Bill, and such an assertion, in face of the difficulties put forward by the hon. and learned Member for East Down (Mr. Rentoul), was perfectly absurd. He did not feel he could trust the Home Secretary as one competent to discuss the questions, for the right hon. Gentleman had actually asserted that the voluntary schools were built and maintained out of the National funds. If the right hon. Gentleman did not know that nearly all the voluntary schools were built by private funds, he was not competent to discuss these questions in the House. What were the arguments put

forth in support of the Bill? It had been said that the Church possessed the compulsory powers granted in the Bill. Would it be believed that these compulsory powers had never been put into operation in recent years—if they had ever been put into operation at all—and the attempts which had been made by his hon. Friends, time after time, to repeal these powers had been defeated by hon. Gentlemen from Wales. The hon. Member for Mid-Glamorgan (Mr. S. Evans) had cited a case in which the trustees of a chapel had received notice to quit in the middle of the term of a 99 years' lease. Was that possible? Could the covenants of the lease have been broken in that fashion?

MR. S. T. EVANS said that the lady who granted the lease found, afterwards, that she had not power to grant it.

VISCOUNT CRANBORNE asked was the time of the House to be taken up with such cases? Here was an illegal lease granted by a lady who had no power to grant it, and yet it was put forward by the hon. Member as a reason for passing the Bill. Another case cited was that of a chapel in the City of London. The land on which the chapel was built had become very valuable at the end of the lease; an increased rent was asked by the landlord, but the trustees found themselves unable to pay it. But that difficulty would arise under the Bill if passed, and under any other Bill. Another case put forward was that of a Wesleyan chapel which was built under certain covenants and were very restrictive. But why did the trustees agree to these covenants? The trustees must have known very well that by accepting the lease they were bound by the covenants, and having agreed to them did not see why the trustees should now come to Parliament for relief. How would the Bill meet the difficulty of under-leasing?—the difficulty in the case of land which had been originally leased by the landlord to a private person and under-let by that person to a religious body? Would it be fair in a case of that kind that the landlord should be deprived of the possession of this land altogether? Then there was the question of a change of denomination. A landlord might have let his land for the erection of a chapel of a certain denomination. But if that denomina-

tion changed its views, or parted with its interest in the chapel, what power of restraint had the landlord under the Bill? Then there was the question of the difficulty of defining of what a Religious Body was. He had had something to do with the preparation of a Bill for the removal of the necessity for the presence of a registrar in Nonconformist chapels on the occasions of marriages, and the great difficulty experienced was the difficulty of defining what a religious body was.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. H. H. FOWLER, Wolverhampton, E.), said that had not been the difficulty. The difficulty was found in confining the operation of the Act within certain well defined limits.

VISCOUNT CRANBORNE, said that might have been so. However, on the general principle of the Bill, the objection he ventured to raise was an objection to the proposed meddling with contracts which had already been freely entered into by persons capable of knowing what they were doing. It was impossible to dissociate the Bill from other Bills for leasehold enfranchisement which had been submitted to the House. There was a well-defined purpose on the part of certain Members of the House to give power to leaseholders to enfranchise their leases. It appeared to him that that would be most demoralising in its effect, and he hoped the House would never give it its sanction. He recognised that there was a difficulty to be met, or that there might be a difficulty to be met. If hon. Gentlemen could prove that Nonconformists had great difficulty in acquiring places for their religious services a case would have been made out for relief, but he thought the relief should not take the shape of the present Bill. He would prefer to see what some people looked upon as a more stringent measure—namely, a Bill which would provide for the enforced sale of land under certain conditions to religious bodies. Such a Bill would, he thought, be more moral and more satisfactory than the Bill under discussion. He would not give power to any private body to go to a landlord, and say "give me your land at a certain figure?" But it was worth consideration whether it would not be possible for a Nonconformist Body which could prove

to some public authorities that it was a *bonâ fide* religious body, and that it had a considerable number of adherents in the locality, to obtain absolute power to procure the land it wanted for the purposes of building. That seemed to him to be the only way out of the difficulty. But no public authority of any kind intervened under the present Bill, and it was the first time in Parliamentary legislation that it was proposed that a man's land should be taken from him simply by the wish of some private individual or private corporation.

AN hon. MEMBER : "Railways."

VISCOUNT CRANBORNE said the Railway Companies had to come to Parliament for powers to take land, and if a Nonconformist Body came before Parliament and proved it required land for a chapel he was sure Parliament would give them relief. It appeared to him that it was necessary for the protection of the rights of private individuals that some public authority should intervene, and perhaps some scheme might be devised by which some public department could in *bonâ fide* cases of religious bodies requiring land give powers for the compulsory acquisition of the land without such bodies having to undergo the enormous expense of pushing a Bill through Parliament. He was sure that would be a far more complete and a far juster measure than the present Bill, which proposed the breaking of contracts voluntarily entered into merely for the benefit of one party in the contract.

MR. WARNER rose in his place, and claimed to move, "That the Question be now put ;" but MR. SPEAKER withheld his assent, and declined then to put the Question.

MR. J. E. W. ADDISON (Ashton-under-Lyne) said he was strongly in favour of the Bill in its present form. In taking up that position he had not been in the least influenced by the number of cases of hardship which had been cited by hon. Members who spoke in support of the Bill. These things might happen under any conditions. He went on a wider and a broader principle—namely, that it was desirable, in the interest of religious bodies and in the interest of the community, that churches and chapels should be freehold and not leasehold. They all knew, that not only in the Church of England, but in the various Protestant

denominations the chapel was the centre of the social and religious life of every district ; it was the place on which the members of the congregations liked to spend their money and to decorate and beautify it, but their interest in the building was not so keen if the site was leasehold, and subject to the restrictions to which all leasehold property was subject. It would be a great outrage on such religious communities if they were at the end of a lease compelled either to part with their chapel altogether or make fresh terms with the landlord. An objection had been raised to the Bill that it did not provide for the absolute freehold, but merely gave perpetuity leases. But that was a mistake. The Bill provided for a perpetual rent charge, which was the ordinary tenure on which land was held in Lancashire. They were free from all covenants, and so long as they paid the rent charge they had what was equal to the freehold of the land. That was the sort of tenure proposed by the Bill, and it was one there was no difficulty whatever in creating. Something had been said, too, about this Bill being confiscation. But surely if the full price of the day was paid to the landlord for his land, which he had already parted with, it would not be confiscation. There would be no difficulty in ascertaining in the County Court what the land was worth, and in fixing the price to be paid by way of a perpetual rent annuity. It was done every day, and he did not see where the injustice came in in taking the land from the landlord when he was paid the full price for it. Complaint had been made that the Bill contained no definition of a religious body. The promoters of the Bill would have been very unwise if they had attempted any such definition. No definition of a religious body could be given without too much being included or too much being excluded. The Bill defined "a place of worship" as meaning "any church, chapel, or meeting-house belonging to, or held in trust for, a religious body, for the purpose of and used by such religious body for religious worship." That seemed to him to answer all the objections raised on that point, for any lawyer exercising common-sense would have no doubt whatever that that meant a building wholly devoted to religious worship by a religious body holding it according to trust. Then

with regard to sub-tenants and sub-leases, everybody knew that no sub-lease could be made if the original lessor put a covenant in the agreement against it, and no landlord had a right to complain of the granting of such leases if he had not inserted in his original lease a proviso prohibiting them from being granted. There was one remark of the Home Secretary with which he did not agree. The right hon. Gentleman seemed to convey that this Bill did not confer a privilege on religious bodies and was not an endowment of religious bodies. Undoubtedly to allow these religious bodies to come into the possession of the sites of their chapels compulsorily was, so far, giving them a privilege. But it was a privilege the House gladly gave them. He had endeavoured to show that this Bill ought to pass in the interest of the religious bodies themselves. He might go on another ground, that it was the interest of the Church of England to which he belonged. The interest of the Church of England was founded upon doing away with all those inequalities which created irritation in the minds of Nonconformists. He had always thought it was the interest of the Church that every possible privilege should be granted to these religious bodies. He viewed the privilege contained in the Bill as one of them, and he gave that privilege very freely indeed, because it tended to promote good feeling between the different religious forces of the country and to promote that religious peace which more than anything else was the foundation of our prosperity.

\***MR. J. K. WINGFIELD-DIGBY** (Dorset, N.), said the Bill was backed by hon. Members from Wales, and one could not help feeling how refreshing it was to find among these hon. Gentlemen the spirit of establishing and endowing Churches, especially in these days of rumours of the disestablishment and the disendowment of the most powerful religious body in the country. He was a Churchman, but he was on terms of great friendship with many Nonconformists. He knew nothing about the landlords of Wales, but he did know something about the landlords of England, and in his part of England it was not an uncommon thing, if the Nonconformists wanted land for their chapels, for the landlords to give them that land without

charging them anything for it. It struck him that if the sites of chapels were given in this way, the temptation not to pay rent—as the payment of rent was a slur on religion, so one hon. Member had said—would be avoided. That convenient article of faith—that no rent should be paid—which had come from Ireland, had not perhaps at the present time advanced further than Wales; but if, as in the case of a number of agricultural districts with which he was acquainted, sites for Nonconformist chapels were given for nothing, the temptation of not paying rent would be avoided. In connection with this question, there were two modes of letting; there was first the building lease. He was strongly in favour of Nonconformist religious bodies—he should like to add Christian religious bodies, so as to exclude Buddhists and Mohammedans—having the privilege of compulsorily enfranchising the sites of their chapels; but it was only right to claim for the landlord the same right of compelling religious bodies to enfranchise if he wished to do so. If there was to be coercion and compulsory powers let the coercion and compulsory powers apply to both sides. But there were other forms of letting; there were cases where a landlord leased a house or other building as a chapel. He knew a case in which the landowner granted a building lease, and a house was built in connection with a large and well-known school in the West of England. That house was built as a house for boarding scholars attending that school, but the lease was ultimately sold to another body—an alien and foreign body—which happened to be a Roman Catholic body. [*Cries of "Oh, oh!"*] He was not ashamed to call them so; therefore if they gave the right of enfranchisement they should give security, so as to prevent the introduction of bodies of that kind, against the wishes of the landlord and the wishes of the people, in a thoroughly Protestant district. That was one case he would not like to see coming under this Bill. He would like to suggest that there should be an appeal on the part of the landowner to some public body, as to whether the case for enfranchisement was a complete case or not. He thought the vast majority of landowners were perfectly ready to afford every facility they possibly could to people to carry on their Christian

worship in the way they liked best. That being so he was not opposed to the Bill, and would not vote against it.

\*COLONEL HUGHES (Woolwich) said he had supported the Bill two years ago, and he would support it now again for the reason that he believed it to be a conservative measure. The increase of freeholders would add to the stability of the State. In Ireland they had done away with dual ownership, and freeholders had been created there by public money; and surely they should encourage in England persons to become freeholders who desired to become freeholders out of funds contributed by themselves. He knew what harm could be done a Bill by hon. Members speaking even in its support, and delaying the Question being put; therefore for the purpose of setting a good example he would leave out all the rest of his remarks.

\*MR. W. JOHNSTON (Belfast, E.) expressed his entire sympathy with the Bill now before the House. He wished to dissociate himself altogether from his hon. and learned Friend the Member for East Down (Mr. Rentoul), who represented the constituency in which he lived. He had voted for the hon. Member, but on this occasion they took different sides. He hoped the House would speedily pass this Bill into law, and he desired in the name of the Nonconformists of Ulster to express his sympathy with the Nonconformists of England and Wales, although he was a member of the Synod of the Church of Ireland, and not a Nonconformist. He hoped, in the name of civil and religious liberty, that this Bill would pass.

MR. J. CUMMING MACDONA (Rotherhithe, Southwark) said, that as one of the few Members of the House who had for some years occupied the honoured position of a clergyman of the Church of England, and speaking for the first time in the House of Commons, he was glad to support the principle of this Bill. He believed it was one of justice to the Nonconformists, and as such it would have his earnest support.

MR. WOOTTON ISAACSON (Tower Hamlets, Stepney) said, that in the discussions which took place on the Bill two years ago, he had pointed out that he would be happy to support it if

it contained a reverter clause, and a promise was given that such a clause would be put into the Bill when it came again before the House. He now found, however, that no reverter clause was in the Bill. He was one of those who felt that sites required for religious purposes should be granted at the smallest possible rent. In fact, he had granted sites on such terms on a great many occasions, and only very recently he granted two sites for religious purposes at the nominal rent of five shillings per annum. In one of these cases the congregation grew so large that an application was made for another site to build a chapel of much larger dimensions. He naturally thought that the old site would be handed over in consideration of the new site, but that was not so, for another application was made that the old site should be retained for the building of a row of cottages. In common fairness he hoped that the promoters of the Bill would insert in it a reverter clause, in order to safeguard the interests of property holders in cases such as that he had mentioned. Properties in Wales were honeycombed with places of worship—he knew one property which had hundreds of those chapels—and he thought the owners of these properties should be protected by a reverter clause, providing that the land should go back again to its owners when it ceased to be used for religious purposes. There was another matter that he wished to call attention to. In the East End of London it was a common practice to use Nonconformist chapels for political meetings. He thought there should be a clause in the Bill to prevent that. However, he did not intend to vote against the Bill, because he thought it was a proper Bill, but he hoped its promoters would give him some assurance that a reverter clause would be inserted in it.

An hon. MEMBER: It is in the Bill.

Main Question put, and agreed to.

MR. S. T. EVANS moved that the Bill be referred to the Standing Committee on Law and Courts of Justice and Legal Procedure.

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read a second time, and committed to the Standing Committee on Law, &c.

## CHEAP TRAINS (LONDON) BILL.—(No. 25.)

## SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

\*SIR J. BLUNDELL MAPLE (Camberwell, Dulwich), in moving the Second Reading of the Bill, said that any one acquainted with the East End of London, and saw the poverty and the number of little children in the crowded thoroughfares, must agree that anything that would assist the working men to get out into the country after they had done their work, and to return to work in the morning, must be a great advantage to the working classes. This Bill was a very small Bill, but he maintained that it was a very important one. In 1883 the Cheap Trains Act was passed, and that Act gave to the President of the Board of Trade the power of arranging at what time workmen's trains should run between 6 in the evening and 8 in the morning, and also gave over to the President of the Board of Trade the power of deciding at what fares. There had been since that time an enormous quantity of workmen's trains started, but they still found large districts without any workmen's trains whatever, and the reason was that people would not build workmen's cottages in the suburbs unless they knew the fare that would be charged by the railway companies, because the cost of the fare had to be added to the rent. The statutory fare was 1d. per mile, and consequently any one residing 12 miles from London would have to pay 2s. per day or 12s. per week. In consequence of this, by the wisdom of Parliament, working-class trains were started, and they had evidence before them that they were most successful wherever these trains were started, and that in the districts in which they were started the poor workmen went to reside and formed large communities. On the Great Eastern Railway there were many trains going backwards and forwards conveying these poor workers, but on the Midland Railway there was but one coming to London, and that at 5 o'clock in the morning, consequently workmen's houses were not built in that direction. On the Great Western main line not a single workmen's train came to London, and they all knew there was a large district there that could be easily

developed. The Bill he was now moving the Second Reading of did not in any way interfere with the power of the President of the Board of Trade, nor were the railway companies interfered with by the Bill. The Bill simply fixed a rate, and that rate was this: For all distances not exceeding five miles the fare should be 2d., including the return; five miles and not exceeding 10 miles the fare should be 4d.; 10 miles but not exceeding 15 the fare to be 6d.; and 15 miles but not exceeding 20 miles the fare should be 8d. That arrangement he believed was one that would pay and would be satisfactory, and it was an arrangement which he hoped would eventually be the basis under which all railway companies would be able to work. Last year the Metropolitan Railway Company agreed to give similar rates to these, and he informed the House on the 12th May last that he had a letter, signed by J. Bell, the Manager, on behalf of the Metropolitan Railway Company, running as follows:—

"We will undertake, as from the 1st proximo, to adopt the following scale of fares—namely, for five miles and under, twopence; for five miles and under 10 miles, fourpence; for 10 miles and under 15 miles, sixpence; including return in each case. Daily and weekly tickets on that basis."

And, furthermore, the Manchester, Sheffield, and Lincolnshire Railway Company introduced a clause in their Bill that they would carry passengers at the same rate as the Metropolitan. That, therefore, was most satisfactory. The Metropolitan proceeded to run those trains at that price, but it would be a great advantage to the working classes if we could establish, so to speak, a similar zone on all the other Metropolitan railways. Houses would be built in different localities, and every workman would know, if he was a certain distance from the terminus, what fare he would have to pay. In Hungary the zone system had been a very great success, and they had all read how the zone system worked there. In Hungary the distance of the first zone is 15 miles, and there they were carried for sixpence. The second zone went to 25 miles, which was one shilling for third-class passengers. The third zone was 34 miles, which was one-and-sixpence. Those charges were considerably less than the charges he was proposing to be adopted by the Bill.

In 1891 he brought forward a similar Bill, and was met by the right hon. Baronet the late President of the Board of Trade (Sir Michael Hicks - Beach) with the reply that he thought the London County Council should deal with this subject. Well, the London County Council had dealt with the subject to a certain extent; they had issued a very voluminous Report, making a comparison of the last year, and it had been calculated, no doubt, with a deal of trouble. They had also set forth in this Report what they would advise the right hon. Gentleman the President of the Board of Trade (Mr. Mundella) to do. He knew the right hon. Gentleman to be a very industrious, hard-working man, and he was perfectly certain he had the interest of the working classes at heart, and no doubt in due course he would do his best to further the interests of the workers of this great Metropolis, for he well knew what a large and important body they were. When dealing with the working classes it would be well for him to state, and for the House to remember, that in the Metropolis they had not only thousands, but tens of thousands, nay, hundreds of thousands, of working men who were not employed in the building trades. They had very large factories in London, and the principal portion of the working classes of London did not go to their work until nearly 8 o'clock in the morning. The Bill did not propose to alter the present Statute with respect to workmen's trains arriving at their destination before 8 o'clock in the morning, but these people could not live in the country without houses to live in. The recommendations of the Public Health and Housing Committee of the London County Council are as follows:—

"Further suggestions indicative of improvements required in the service of Workmen's Trains, being supplemental to those set out at the end of the first Report.

"1. That in the case of the neighbourhoods or stations to which special attention is called in the above Reports, and which are served by no workmen's trains, pressure should at once be brought to bear upon the railway companies concerned to provide suitable train accommodation.

"The case of the stations on the Great Western Railway main line between Southall and Paddington, and of the district outside Willesden on the North Western and Great Western lines, are particularly referred to.

"2. That all trains leaving stations within the limits of the workmen's train system, and timed to reach the London terminus up to 8 a.m., should be regarded as workmen's trains.

"3. That more adequate provision should be made for workmen's down trains from the London termini to stations within the limits, above mentioned, to serve workmen living in London but working in the outskirts, and that such trains should start up to 7.30 a.m.

"4. Referring to the suggestion already made, that in addition to daily tickets monthly or quarterly season tickets should be issued, attention is called to the fact that nearly all of the companies allow quarterly season tickets at half the ordinary charge to issue to pupil teachers, students, and apprentices under 18 years of age learning a trade or profession, and that to extend this advantage to workmen and others practising a vocation which compels them to travel at an early hour, including women and girls, seems but natural.

"5. That where there is not sufficient 3rd Class accommodation by any workmen's trains, and carriages of a better class form parts of the trains, workmen should be permitted to use the higher class carriages without risk of penalties.

"6. That on the main point, viz., that of the common basis on which workmen's fares should be fixed, whilst affirming the view already expressed, that the matter is one for the joint consideration of the companies themselves, it is believed that the true solution of the problem lies in the establishment of some zone system, treating each terminal station as the centre, and fixing the cost of tickets accordingly, such tickets to be good for all stations within the particular zone, and regard being had in fixing the zones to the desirability from a public point of view of offering inducements to the working classes to make their homes as far as reasonably practicable from the centre of London. For example, there might be three distances or zones, the first covering 5 miles, the second 10, and third 15 miles and upwards."

He was not always in accord with the London County Council, but he thought this recommendation of theirs was very good indeed. In fact, in his previous Bills he thought a halfpenny a mile, including return, would be a right and proper fare, but in view of the recommendation of the London County Council, and after consultation with friends, he had arrived at the conclusion that it would be far better to have the maximum rates fixed, as provided in this Bill, for each of the zones, and when that was established it was anticipated the working classes would go further away to reside, and that the people would greatly improve in health. The Bill did not interfere with the action of the Railway Companies or the action of the President of the Board of Trade, it rather strengthened the hands of the right hon.



Gentleman, and enabled him to set forth what should be a good and proper rate. Railway Companies at the present time were receiving, in his opinion, very harsh treatment from some of the public. He knew there were few agencies that had done more for Great Britain than the Railway Companies, but each Railway Company had a different interest, and this question of workmen's trains had not received that kind of consideration it ought to have received; he therefore hoped that the House would adopt the principle of the Bill. He ought to mention he had deviated somewhat from his former proposal, with respect to workmen being allowed to return at five o'clock on week-days and twelve o'clock on Saturdays. He had been making careful inquiries since then, and he found that all railways now running workmen's trains were more lenient still, and allowed workmen to return at four o'clock on week-days, and twelve o'clock on Saturdays. But having regard to the fact that on certain days when it was wet, or from other reasons, workmen were not always able to work when they arrived, he would urge that Railway Companies should divide the return traffic over all their trains so that such workmen should not be compelled to wait until the specified time for returning. He submitted the Bill to the House, and he believed that if it was passed speculative builders and building societies would proceed to build houses for the working classes to live in. It was impossible for the President of the Board of Trade to ask the Railway Companies to run trains until there were passengers to carry, but they could not have these unless houses were provided for their accommodation, and, therefore, if the House would only fix a scale of charges which would be fair both to the Railway Companies and the working classes, he was confident that houses would soon be provided, the result of which would be that London would become less congested, and the health of the poor, and particularly the poor children they now found in the narrow courts and alleys, would be considerably improved.

SIR F. D. DIXON-HARTLAND (Middlesex, Uxbridge) said, he seconded the Second Reading of the Bill, which he thought was a great improvement upon any Bill yet brought into the House upon this

subject. The other Bills to which the hon. Member had referred were of too limited a character, and only allowed workmen residing within a short distance of London to come in to their work. Now, if they only went a short distance out of London, the price of land for building was nearly as high as it was in London itself, and therefore it was only by going further afield that they were able to get better air and cheaper buildings. What was wanted was that the workmen should get purer air and cheap means of living, and he thought if the House passed this Bill these requirements would be met. When the Bill was introduced before the radius was so small, there was really no part of London that was not within its limits, but the Bill now proposed to take in the whole Metropolitan Police area, including Watford, Uxbridge, Staines, Sevenoaks, Epping, and many other places, all of which were brought within the radius of the Bill, and they were all parts where there were great quantities of land available for building purposes, and when workmen's houses were built it would do a great deal towards removing the congestion that existed in London. He believed the Bill would have the effect of increasing the profits of the railway companies, and therefore it would be short-sighted policy on the part of the companies to oppose it. It was well known that the greater part of the profit made by every railway company came from the third-class passenger traffic, and therefore he thought the Bill was one that should commend itself to every one. He had great pleasure in seconding it.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a Second time."—(Sir J. Blundell Maple.)

\*SIR J. PEASE (Durham, Barnard Castle) said he should not divide against the Second Reading of the Bill, but he wanted to call the attention of the House to the actual position of affairs at the present moment. No one respected more than he did the motives of his hon. Friends—namely, to get people out of London into the country. Some of them who lived in the country and resided in London for short periods knew perfectly well that London was

not a paradise, and he was very anxious to do all that was reasonable and right to assist the working classes of London in getting into the country, not only for the sake of the people but in order that the railway companies might make a profit for themselves. But what were the powers of the Board of Trade at this moment? The Board of Trade had very large powers indeed; they could regulate within certain limits the times at which workmen's trains should run, and, through the railway companies, the fares to be paid. This Bill went only one step further, as he understood it, than the Board of Trade powers at the present moment, and that, the hon. Member stated, was the establishment of zones, peremptory zones. These zones were to apply to every railway coming into London, regardless of the circumstances under which they had been constructed. The circumstances of railways differed very much, indeed. The Great Eastern charged low prices, for this reason: In making their Shoreditch Station they had to pull down an enormous number of workmen's houses, and the choice was given to them of finding accommodation for the people in the neighbourhood of the station, or affording facilities for their living in the country. But the right hon. Gentleman who brought in the Bill did not propose to put on all the other Railway Companies the low fares of the Great Eastern. Then the Manchester, Sheffield, and Lincoln on their extension to London entered into an arrangement with the Metropolitan Railway Company by which certain charges were fixed. He thought it would be more fair to the Railway Companies if they had an opportunity of appearing before a Committee of the House and stating whether they had any objection to the establishment of zone fares. It appeared to him that if the House agreed to the Second Reading of this Bill—and he, for one, did not quarrel with the principle of the Bill—it should be referred to some tribunal, either a Select or Standing Committee, so that the Railway Companies might appear and make their objections, or offer suggestions as to the scale of fares and such regulations as would suit the character of the traffic. With regard to the return of workmen by any train, he thought it would be most inconvenient.

If the Bill were given a Second Reading he would appeal to the President of the Board of Trade to have it sent to a Select Committee, or some other similar tribunal.

MR. W. AMBROSE (Middlesex, Harrow) quite agreed with the hon. Member who had just sat down (Sir J. Pease) that there was a tribunal—namely, the Board of Trade—that had proved itself capable of dealing with the question, at all events to some extent; but it must be apparent to anyone, who had any kind of recollection of what had taken place in the only cases that had come before the Board of Trade, that there was a great difficulty in putting the Board of Trade in motion, because it involved, or might involve, considerable cost. Supposing there was an absence of workmen's trains, who was there to take the matter up on behalf of the working men? There was no one, because what was everyone's business was the business of no one. What he should like to see was something more definite than was laid down in the Cheap Trains Act of 1883, referred to by the hon. Gentleman, and which was a provision enabling the Board of Trade to call upon a Railway Company, if sufficient workmen's trains were not provided, to provide such workmen's trains as appeared to the Board to be reasonable. The House would observe that in the Act there were two sets of trains; but there was nothing to tell what was a workmen's train, and he need hardly say that if the fares were not properly adjusted the trains would be altogether useless for workmen. What they were doing was, they were insisting on the right of the workmen to their trains; and not only that, but showing that it was in the interests of the companies themselves that they should provide these trains. He would endeavour to sustain his proposition on those points if the House would follow him for a moment or two. The 5th and 6th Vic., chap. 73, Section 2, imposed a railway passenger duty on Railway Companies. That was at 5 per cent. The 7th and 8th Vic., Section 6, provided that the companies should run cheap trains at 1d. per mile, and, in consideration of their running these trains, they were exempted from duty in regard to them. He next came to the Act of 1883, dealing with the

provision in regard to cheap trains. It made provision for cheap trains at 1d. per mile, but it also provided for workmen's trains, and showed that, in consideration of their running those trains, they could have the duty reduced to 2 per cent. That was provided for by one section, which he need not, however, trouble the House by reading. He would like the House, however, to see how that state of things affected the companies. He found, by the Returns of the Board of Trade, that there was a very considerable difference between the amount paid by the Metropolitan Railway Company in duty in the year 1884 and the amount paid in 1882. The figures had been quoted before the Railway Commissioners, in the presence of the traffic managers, and they remained unchallenged. The traffic managers declared in evidence that they had had ordinary passenger trains between 5 o'clock and 8 a.m., and none of them paid; on the contrary, each of them meant an absolute loss. But they put on workmen's trains, and that portion of the traffic paid them. It was greatly to their advantage—as it was to the credit of this company—that they had put on the trains ordered by the Commissioners, at the fares fixed by that body, and that they had also arranged a service running a larger number of trains from Baker Street to Neasden than they were required to do. There could be no doubt that the workmen's trains would be very remunerative, and they would be of great value to workmen who wished to get fresh air, and whose families were bound to be happier and more content if living in the suburban districts. It was perfectly obvious that the regular passengers did not go in or out of London before 8 or 9 o'clock in the morning. The regular traffic might be said to commence at 8.30. It was very difficult for the ordinary man—the working man—to proceed by deputation to the Board of Trade. The House could assist in securing what they ought to have—a good supply of cheap trains for workmen, and he hoped it would do so. He had pleasure in supporting the measure.

MR. T. H. BOLTON (St. Pancras, N.) said, they had heard from the hon. Gentleman who had just addressed the House that he supported the Bill because it provided for cheap trains. He

wished to say that while he supported it for that reason, too, he also supported it because he was glad to see that there was a desire on the part of the promoters to introduce the zone system on railways into England. This system had hardly been considered by the companies at the present time, but he thought it ought to be applied to the railways that served London. The powers of the Board of Trade were much too limited in connection with this matter. There was no power on the part of the Board of Trade to enforce the running of cheap trains. All the power that Board had was to report an insufficient number of cheap trains, and ask the Commissioners of Inland Revenue to see that the companies paid the passenger duty in full. That was hardly a sufficient basis upon which to place the right of the Board of Trade to interfere, and he hoped the hands of the Board of Trade would be strengthened, so that the companies might be compelled to discharge their duty to the public. Some of the larger Railway Companies were under no direct statutory obligation, however, to run any cheap trains—such companies as the Great Northern, the Great Western, and the London and North Western. These companies, not being under statutory obligation, did very little towards cheapening trains on behalf of the workmen. The Great Eastern was under some statutory obligation, but that company supplied a large number of trains—a number far beyond that included in the obligation. They had, indeed, a better service than any other company, and they got their reward in a heavy and most remunerative traffic. The other lines, as he had said, were not affected by Statute Law. These companies served important districts, and he thought the Board of Trade could not do better than consider whether they could not be compelled to run workmen's trains in accordance with the requirements of the people. The great monopoly which these companies enjoyed was subject to one primary condition—and that was, that the requirements of the public should be met, and it was only just that increased obligations should be imposed with the increase of the population of London and the consequent necessity for a larger number of trains.

*Mr. W. Ambrose*

He did not rise for the purpose of going into detail. He wished to express his strong desire to help as far as he could in carrying this very useful Bill. There was no use in their talking about the urgency of relieving the congestion among the population of London, and about providing better homes for the workmen of the City unless they dealt with the matter in a practical spirit. The cost of reaching the outer suburbs was at present prohibitive to workmen; and unless they afforded facilities for the workman to get from his house to his work and from his work to his house, they were only wasting time talking about the enormous advantage to the workman of having better and more comfortable homes outside the Metropolis. The practical way was to enable the workman to get in and out of London by cheap trains. He hoped this Bill would do much in that direction, and he gave it a most cordial support.

\***MR. W. SAUNDERS** (Newington, Walworth) said, he would like to add just a word or two to the discussion. One matter to which he would direct attention was the passenger traffic in the middle of the day and the advantage that would be gained by an increase in the traffic for pleasure. For hours in each day there were running in and out of London a large number of passenger trains that were nearly empty. If the fares were reduced these trains would be crowded by poor people anxious for a little of the country air. He had brought this aspect of the case before Railway Companies, and it was admitted that there would be no practical difficulty in taking thousands of children into the country in the afternoon and bringing them back in the evening; but they could not grant reductions as they were bound to act together, one company could not do what another would not do, and it would be a very difficult matter to get general consent. They should have cheap trains running in the direction that people wanted to go—especially poor people and children. The County Council had urged the question of giving these facilities for mid-day pleasure traffic, and he was sure the right hon. Gentleman the President of the Board of Trade would do something towards carrying out the objects of the Council in this matter.

**MR. D. R. PLUNKET** (Dublin University): I desire to say a very few words on this question. I do so as one who has connection with the London and North Western Railway, to which reference has been made in the course of the debate. In the first place, I would like to express my entire sympathy—and I think I may say the sympathy of the Directors—with the object of the Bill before the House. At the same time, I would say that if the Bill should pass in its present form it would create considerable injustice to these great companies, and it would certainly create very great inconvenience, because the Bill—whatever its intentions are or those of its promoters—is admittedly an attempt by one sweeping provision to draw a hard and fast line as to what is a fair charge for those using the railways. The matter of fares is one that necessarily involves a good many considerations relating to railway management. It is a matter involving complicated considerations. I do not wish to say one word in opposition to the Second Reading of the Bill, nor shall I enter into any controversial point or anything that I might for a time be prepared to dispute. The discussion has been conducted in a spirit of fairness, and that is the best spirit in which these discussions can be conducted. I only desire to say this: that I agree with the suggestion that the right hon. Gentleman the President of the Board of Trade should refer the Bill to a Select Committee of the House to be dealt with in a practical way. That is the most careful and practical way in which it can be disposed of, for there are many points which the right hon. Gentleman will understand could not be dealt with in the House itself. If the right hon. Gentleman is willing to refer the Bill to a Select Committee, the companies, I am satisfied, will be quite willing to go before the Committee, and place before it any information that may help towards a conclusion satisfactory to both them and the public.

**MR. J. ROWLANDS** (Finsbury, E.) said, there was a distinction to be drawn between workmen's trains and other trains, and he would direct the attention of the House to the charges set forth in maximum in the Bill—charges of which there might be a tendency on the part of the companies to take advantage.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE (Mr. MUNDELLA, Sheffield, Brightside) : Yes ; they might do that.

MR. J. ROWLANDS said, he agreed with what had been stated with regard to the system of workmen's trains on the Great Eastern. That company ran trains for over 10 miles at a fare of 2d.

SIR J. BLUNDELL MAPLE : That is by Statute.

MR. J. ROWLANDS said in this way the company went beyond the requirements of the Statute, and, also, they went far beyond any other line having termini in the Metropolis, by running such a number of trains per day. He hoped the right hon. Gentleman the late Commissioner of Works (Mr. Plunket) would urge upon the London and North Western Company the desirability of following the example of the Great Eastern. The London and North Western, the Midland, and the Great Northern, stood out in London as absolutely making no effort to deal with this question. He thought it only right that attention should be drawn to the generosity of one company where the public interests were concerned. If the Bill went to a Committee he had hopes that action of the Great Eastern would be considered, so that the facilities on other lines might be increased.

MR. MUNDELLA : I need scarcely say that I have listened with satisfaction to the desire expressed by hon. Gentlemen on all sides of the House to strengthen the hands of the Board of Trade in dealing with these matters. I will only detain the House for a very short time in relation to this. Every Member of the House must desire to give increased facilities to workmen to get away into the country for the advantages of fresh air and cheap house rent—fresh air, especially for the children—should induce us to combine in the effort to afford these facilities to workmen to live outside the crowded districts of London. Everything the House can do I am sure it will be prepared to do. But I do not see why this Bill should not extend to other great cities. Why should not Glasgow and Manchester, and Birmingham and Sheffield have the same facilities offered them as London? The hon. Gentleman opposite seemed to have some doubt whether the Board of Trade is moving

sufficiently quick in this matter ; but I can inform the House that the question has received the close attention of the Board for a considerable time past. In April last the London County Council made a Report on the question of workmen's trains, which was a most able and comprehensive document. This Report was sent to the Board of Trade, and the Board of Trade at once communicated with all railways having termini in the Metropolis, asking what answer they had to make to the demands of the Council. The answers came in during the autumn and winter, and they were sent forward to the County Council on the 21st of January last. We now await the reply of the Council. We propose that there should be got together a conference of the County Council and the companies and the Board of Trade to discuss the question, and bring about some arrangement that would meet the views of all parties. The Bill that is before us would, in my opinion, do a great deal of harm as well as a little good. In many respects it is unworkable, and I need scarcely point out that it tends to increase the congestion and overcrowding of trains, and its provisions generally would have the effect, if adopted by the House, of taking over the management of the railways into the hands of the House. I am not disposed to ask the House to take a complicated question like this under its control. One effect of the Bill would be to raise the maximum considerably beyond the fares which some of the companies now charge. It is most desirable that workmen's trains should be kept as cheap as possible. They cannot be useful to those whom they are intended to serve unless they are as cheap as possible. The hon. Member spoke of the Bill as likely to stimulate building operations. Well, I do not agree with that. Down to the time the Act of 1883 was passed there were only 12 trains—workmen's trains—out of London in a day. In 1890 there were 88 trains, and since then there has been a further increase. Some of the companies have acted very generously. There are others that do not act generously, whether the question be one of rates or not. These latter companies are obstacles to progress, and it is desirable to bring them into line with those who do not act in that way.

What I propose to do is this : That you should allow this Bill to have a Second Reading in order to show that we approve of the principle of the Bill, and that it then be referred to a Select Committee in order that evidence may be taken not only in the interest of the Railway Companies, but on behalf of the London County Council, which can place the evidence in its possession before the Committee; and then, I trust, all parties being fairly heard, we will be able to arrive at a conclusion generally satisfactory to the workmen, to the railways, to the County Council, and to the Board of Trade. I believe that the Railway Companies do not suffer from granting adequate facilities. It is the companies that are most unwilling to grant facilities to workmen that have returned the best dividends, and I am certain that there must be great benefit to those companies that supply the workmen with an ample train service. It has been suggested that workmen's fares should extend to all trains. I do not think that would be desirable, for it would tend to over-crowding. If we say the Scotch Express from London—would it not be most unreasonable to apply such fares in that case? That is not what the workmen desire. They desire trains for their own convenience—to take them to and from their work. They do not seek to interfere with long-distance travelling, or to crowd the carriages of those trains. I believe the House is most anxious to accomplish what the workmen require. I give my assent to the Second Reading on the condition which I have stated—that the Bill be at once referred to a Select Committee.

\*SIR MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH (Bristol, W.) : I agree with the observations which the right hon. Gentleman has addressed to the House. The course he has decided upon appears to be the best and safest for the public and for the companies. I do not wish to object to that course; but I would venture to point out in a very few words how it is that, in my humble opinion, the Bill as it stands would do more harm than good. The first point is the question of the amount of the fares to be charged; and under the Bill I find that there would be a distinct tendency to make

the statutory fare in excess of the fares charged by the companies who give the best workmen's trains at the present moment—the Great Eastern, for example, which, as has been very properly said, does its duty in this respect much better than any other company. Then workmen's fares are proposed to be charged on any train leaving London after 5 o'clock on five days of the week and after 12 o'clock on Saturdays. But it is to be remembered that 5 o'clock is the very hour at which the greatest volume of the ordinary afternoon main line traffic to the country from London begins; while on Saturdays it is considerably earlier. If you inquire into this matter, you will find that there is a very serious risk of over-crowding the great lines if you adopt the hours proposed in this Bill. The Bill limits the fares to be charged on workmen's trains, without rendering it necessary to run these trains at all. The companies might walk through the Bill if they liked to do so. The right hon. Gentleman has very fairly represented my action at the Board of Trade. When, speaking in the House two years ago, I pointed out that it was the intention of the Legislature in the Cheap Trains Act that the Board of Trade should be moved to action in this matter through some Local Body. The London County Council then took that action, and deserves very great credit for the admirable Report, a copy of which the Board of Trade sent last summer to each of the companies. Before the County Council drew up that Report the companies were asked by the Board of Trade to meet a Committee of the London County Council, but, I regret to say, they declined to do so. Well, the Report was sent to them, and their answers were of a dilatory character. The Great Western, which does not run one single workmen's train on the main line, sent an answer deprecating the necessity for trains of this class at all, and entirely putting off the consideration of the matter. Cannot the right hon. Gentleman do something to compel action by the Railway Companies under the existing powers of the law? The Cheap Trains Act (1883) provides—

"If at any time the Board of Trade has reason to believe that, upon any railway carrying passengers, proper trains are not provided for

workmen at reasonable hours and fares, then the Board of Trade may order such provision."

Cannot the right hon. Gentleman enforce that? He might at least, I think, insist on the companies which are most in fault adopting some of the recommendations contained in the Report of the County Council Committee. I take it that this is not the place to go into the matter, but some of these companies require to be brought to a sense of their duty. They would be more practically dealt with in the manner I suggest than they would be by the application of the clauses of this Bill. I am very far from desiring to stop the progress of the Bill. If it is the will of the House that it be read a second time, this will probably be taken as an assertion that the present state of things is unsatisfactory, and that something must be done, and then I hope my right hon. Friend will do his best to put into force the powers of the existing law.

**MR. MUNDELLA:** One word of explanation. My reason for asking that the Bill should be read a second time is to give expression to the opinion of the House on the lines suggested by the right hon. Baronet.

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a second time, and committed to a Select Committee.

#### JUSTICES OF THE PEACE BILL.—(No. 1.)

##### SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

**MR. LUTTRELL** (Devon, Tavistock), in moving the Second Reading of the Bill, said, this Bill had been introduced in the House of Commons before, and had received considerable support. An agitation had been going on in the country for a reform of the Magistrates' Bench. The system that existed at present was not a popular system, and without a popular system they would never command popular sympathy. There were many reasons for the reform of the present system. Many people believed that the law was made by the rich man and administered against the poor; and, again, men were often appointed to the Bench not because they were suited for

the Bench, but because the Bench was supposed to be suitable for them. One reason why the poor man was not in sympathy with the administration of the law was that there had been a property qualification; and he would like to know if it was the intention of the Home Secretary to support a proposal, or himself introduce a measure, for the abolition of that qualification? But even if they had a Bill abolishing that qualification, it would not be a complete solution of this question. So long as they allowed the Lords Lieutenant to appoint Magistrates, they did not abolish the property qualification. For Lord Lieutenants were themselves appointed on a property qualification, and so long as the power of the Lord Lieutenant was retained, so long would they have that qualification exercising control of the country. He did not wish to enter into detail, but he would say that the Bill proposed the abolition of the objectionable qualification, and it proposed to make the Chairmen of Boards of Guardians and Chairmen of Urban Sanitary Authorities Justices of the Peace by virtue of their offices. It also proposed that the County Council and the Town Council should have a voice in the selection of Justices. He would appeal to gentlemen on either side to support the Bill, and let it pass the Second Reading.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."—(*Mr. Luttrell*.)

**MR. A. F. JEFFREYS** (Hants, Basingstoke) said, Magistrates in the counties at the present time conducted the business of the country with great ability and in a thoroughly efficient manner. It was a great advantage, he thought, to the poor that they could have their cases decided by several Magistrates instead of having only one. The property qualification was a very useful provision, because it makes it certain that a Magistrate will have his residence in the county in which he acts, and also because it gave him reasons for staying there to discharge his duties.

It being half an hour after Five of the Clock, the Debate stood adjourned.

Debate to be resumed upon Wednesday next.

*Sir Michael Hicks-Beach*

HOURS OF LABOUR (RAILWAY  
SERVANTS) BILL.—(No. 53.)

SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

MR. CHANNING (Northampton, E.) said, that after the suggestion made the other night by the right hon. Gentleman the President of the Board of Trade, that this Bill should be read a second time and referred to the same Committee as the measure of the right hon. Gentleman, he hoped that no objection would be taken to the Second Reading. The Bill simply embodied the results of the Select Committee, and it had on the back of it names of hon. Gentlemen representing all sections of the House.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."—(*Mr. Channing.*)

SIR M. HICKS-BEACH (Bristol, W.): I approved of the Bill of the right hon. Gentleman, which was identical with my own recommendation, but this measure contains matters to which I cannot agree. I must object to the Second Reading being taken without Debate.

Objection being taken to Further Proceeding, the Debate stood adjourned.

Debate to be resumed To-morrow.

JURORS REMUNERATION BILL.  
(No. 182.)

SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."

MR. T. M. HEALY (Louth, N.) said, he did not object to the Bill, but he should like to know what its object was.

MR. ELLIOT (York, N.R., Richmond) said, it was to enable common jurors to have the same remuneration for their trouble as other jurors. He did not see why common jurors, who were often much poorer men than the other jurors, should not have the same remuneration.

MR. ASQUITH: I understand the remuneration is to be paid by the parties to the proceedings?

MR. ELLIOT: Yes.

MR. ASQUITH: That being so I do not object.

SIR M. H. BEACH: Do I understand that the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary assents to the Bill?

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MR. ASQUITH: I see no objection to it whatever.

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a second time, and committed for To-morrow.

PUBLIC LIBRARIES ACT (1892) AMENDMENT BILL.—(No. 96.)

COMMITTEE.

Bill considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Clause 1.

MR. T. M. HEALY said, that as he had already indicated, he had no objection to the Bill, but he observed that the Tory Party—in the person of the Leader of the Opposition or the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Bristol—were disposed to block every Bill that was proposed from the Benches below the Gangway, no matter what its merits might be, and that being the case he and his friends had no alternative but to block the Bills of Tory Members. Unless some honourable understanding were arrived at with Tory Members that they would not block Bills for mere blocking's sake, he should oppose the present Bill. As there was no indication that the Tory Members were willing to be parties to such an understanding, he should move to report Progress.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Chairman do report Progress, and ask leave to sit again."—(*Mr. T. M. Healy.*)

\*SIR F. POWELL (Wigan) said, he had never blocked any of the hon. and learned Member's Bills. He had been particularly forbearing in that respect. He hoped that the hon. Member would select his victims.

MR. STOREY (Sunderland) appealed to the hon. Member opposite (Mr. T. M. Healy) to allow the Bill to pass through Committee. Though a small measure it was an important one; and though the hon. and learned Member had good ground for complaint, he begged that this little ewe lamb might be allowed to pass without obstruction.

MR. T. M. HEALY hoped the Tory Members would be better advised in the future, but in the meantime he would withdraw his opposition.

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

Bill reported, without Amendment; to be read the third time To-morrow.



TRADE UNION PROVIDENT FUNDS BILL.  
(No. 148.)

Considered in Committee, and reported, without Amendment; read the third time, and passed.

## MERCHANDISE MARKS ACTS (1887 and 1891) AMENDMENT BILL.—(No. 150.)

Read a second time, and committed for Wednesday, 29th March.

## RAILWAY SERVANTS (HOURS OF LABOUR) BILL.—(No. 165.)

Order read, for resuming Adjourned Debate on Question [20th February], "That the Bill be now read a second time."

Question again proposed.

Debate resumed.

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read a second time, and committed for Monday next.

## POST OFFICE (ACQUISITION OF SITES) [EXPENSES.]

Resolution [21st February] reported, "That it is expedient to authorise the payment, out of moneys to be provided by Parliament, of any sums with respect to the purchase and acquisition of lands payable under any Act of the present Session to enable Her Majesty's Postmaster General to acquire lands in London, Liverpool, and Leeds for the Public Service, and of all expenses connected with carrying into effect the provisions of such Act."

Resolution agreed to.

## COINAGE [EXPENSES.]

## COINAGE (NO. 2) BILL.

Resolution [21st February] reported,

"That it is expedient to authorise the issue, out of the Consolidated Fund of the United Kingdom, of a Sum not exceeding £250,000, and to apply any interest thereon, towards meeting the expenses incurred in pursuance of 'The Coinage Act, 1891.'"

Resolution agreed to:—Bill ordered to be brought in by Mr. Mellor, Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, Sir John Hibbert, and Mr. Causton.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 221.]

## MUNICIPAL CORPORATIONS ACT (1882) AMENDMENT BILL.—(No. 159.)

Read a second time, and committed for Monday next.

NEW LICENCES (IRELAND) BILL.  
(No. 94.)

Considered in Committee.  
(In the Committee.)

Clause 1.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Clause stand part of the Bill."

Objection being taken to Further Proceeding, the Chairman left the Chair to make his report to the House.

Committee report Progress; to sit again To-morrow.

## SEAMEN'S RATING BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Havelock Wilson, Bill to amend the Law relating to the Rating of Seamen, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Havelock Wilson, Mr. Addison, Mr. Gourley, Sir Seymour King, Major Jones, Mr. Richardson, Mr. Michael Austin, and Mr. Caine.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 222.]

## POST OFFICE (ACQUISITION OF SITES)

## BILL COMMITTEE.

Select Committee on Post Office (Acquisition of Sites) Bill nominated of,—Mr. Kenrick, Mr. Arnold Morley, Sir James Whitehead, and Mr. Yerburch, with Three to be nominated by the Committee of Selection.—(Mr. Arnold Morley.)

## TOWNS IMPROVEMENT (IRELAND) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Knox, Bill to amend the Law relating to the Improvement of Towns in Ireland, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Knox, Mr. Webb, and Mr. Young.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 223.]

## PAYMENT OF MEMBERS BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Labouchere, Bill to secure to Members of the Commons House of Parliament Payment for their Parliamentary Services, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Labouchere, Dr. Clark, Mr. Conybeare, Sir Charles Dilke, Mr. Samuel Evans, Mr. Hunter, Mr. Jacoby, Mr. Kearley, Mr. Picton, Mr. Robert Reid, Mr. Storey, and Mr. Woods.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 224.]

## PUBLIC PETITIONS COMMITTEE.

First Report brought up, and read; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed.

## ADJOURNMENT.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That this House do now adjourn."

## MERCHANDISE MARKS ACT (1887 and 1891) AMENDMENT BILL.

\*MR. STUART WORTLEY (Sheffield, Hallam) said, he desired before the House adjourned to draw attention to the fact that the Merchandise Marks Act (1887 and 1891) Amendment Bill had obtained a Second Reading on the assurance of the hon. Member who moved it that the Bill was printed. He (Mr. Stuart Wortley) had since made inquiries at the Vote Office and was informed that the Bill was not printed, and had not been circulated. The Second Reading, therefore, had been allowed under a total misapprehension.

Motion agreed to.

House adjourned at five minutes before Six o'clock.

## HOUSE OF LORDS,

*Thursday, 23rd February 1893.*

Several Lords—Took the Oath.

TRUSTEE CONSOLIDATION BILL [H.L.]  
(No. 10.)

SECOND READING.

Order of the Day for the Second Reading, read.

THE LORD CHANCELLOR (Lord HERSCHELL) : My Lords, this is a Bill consolidating into one Act a great variety of provisions relating to Trustees which are now to be found in a number of Statutes. In the measure that was introduced some time ago by my noble and learned Friend the late Lord Chancellor a proposal was made to carry out suggestions which had been received to consolidate and codify the law relating to Trustees. It was found that was a matter involving a great deal of difficulty, and serious questions were raised whether it was expedient to attempt to crystallise in that way the decisions which had been arrived at with regard to the liabilities and rights and powers of Trustees. I have thought it better, under these circumstances, to confine the present Bill to the consolidation of the Statute Law relating to Trustees. I think it would be very useful to be able to find in a single Statute all the provisions relating to Trustees instead of their being found, as at present, scattered over a number of Statutes.

Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2<sup>a</sup>."—(*The Lord Chancellor.*)

Motion agreed to ; Bill read 2<sup>a</sup> accordingly, and committed to a Committee of the Whole House on Tuesday next.

ADMINISTRATION OF ESTATES (CONSOLIDATION) BILL [H.L.]—(No. 11.)

SECOND READING.

Order of the Day for the Second Reading, read.

THE LORD CHANCELLOR : My Lords, this also is a Consolidation Statute. It proposes to bring into one Act the various provisions relating to

the administration of estates by Executors and Administrators. It does not propose to amend the law ; it is purely for the purpose of consolidation.

Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2<sup>a</sup>."—(*The Lord Chancellor.*)

Motion agreed to ; Bill read 2<sup>a</sup> accordingly, and committed to a Committee of the Whole House on Tuesday next.

House adjourned at twenty-five minutes before Five o'clock, till To-morrow, a quarter past Four o'clock.

## HOUSE OF COMMONS,

*Thursday, 23rd February 1893.*

## QUESTIONS.

## FOREIGN CLERKS IN LONDON.

COLONEL HOWARD VINCENT (Sheffield, Central) : I beg to ask the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education if, having regard to the fact ascertained by the London Chamber of Commerce, that 35 per cent. of the clerks in the commercial houses of London are foreigners, and to the difficulty English employers have in finding adequate knowledge among their own countrymen for foreign correspondence, the Educational Department will encourage the greater study of foreign languages by making the higher grant equal to that obtainable in natural sciences, leaving it therefore optional both to school managers and students which course should be followed in each case?

THE VICE PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL (Mr. A. H. D. ACLAND, York, W.R., Rotherham) : The grants made by the Education Department for French or German—namely, 2s. or 3s. for each scholar presented according to the recommendation of the Inspector—are precisely on the same footing, and of the same amount, as those made for natural sciences.

COLONEL HOWARD VINCENT : Is there no difference whatever in the grants for foreign languages and natural sciences?

MR. ACLAND: No, Sir ; no difference whatever.

## VISITS TO PAUPERS.

**MR. CHARLES HOBHOUSE** (Somerset, E.): I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board whether, in view of the restrictions now placed on the visitation of pauper inmates of workhouses by their friends and relations, he will send a Circular to the Boards of Guardians throughout the country, instructing them to permit such visits to take place on at least five days in the week, between certain fixed hours in each day?

\***THE PRESIDENT OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD** (Mr. H. H. FOWLER, Wolverhampton, E.): The Regulations of the Board provide that any person may visit any inmate of the workhouse by permission of the master or matron, subject to such conditions and restrictions as the Guardians may prescribe. An arrangement requiring the Guardians throughout the country to permit visits on at least five days in the week, as suggested, might interfere with the discipline of the workhouse and considerably increase the difficulties of administration. If, however, I am informed of any cases where it is considered that the Guardians impose undue restrictions on the visitation of inmates, they shall receive my immediate attention.

## THE ELGIN PROCURATOR FISCAL.

**MR. BEITH** (Inverness, &c.): I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland why the office of Procurator Fiscal for Elgin has been kept vacant since September last; if anyone has yet been nominated for the office; and when the appointment may be announced?

**THE SECRETARY FOR SCOTLAND** (Sir G. TREVELYAN, Glasgow, Bridgeton): The nomination lies with the Sheriff. The duty of the Secretary for Scotland is to confirm or decline to confirm the appointment. The Sheriff made an appointment which, on the 7th November, the Secretary for Scotland was unable to confirm. It was not till the 11th February that the Sheriff made another recommendation which is now being considered.

## POSTMASTERS AS INVESTORS GUIDES.

**MR. JACKSON** (Leeds, N.): I beg to ask the Postmaster General if his attention has been called to a letter and article in *The Yorkshire Post* of 17th February, in which it is stated that a large number of persons have lost the whole of their savings by the failure of the House and Land Investment Trust, Limited, and the Liberator Building Society; that many of these poor people were induced by the postmaster of Thirsk to take their savings out of the Post Office Savings Bank and invest in the Societies named; whether he is aware that a circular headed "Notice to Investors" was issued by the postmaster at Thirsk, and dated from the post office there, in which, describing himself as postmaster, he recommends the House and Land Investment Trust, Limited, London, and the Liberator Building Society as the best and safest home investments for either large or small sums at 5 or 6 per cent.; and adds that he has been appointed agent for these Societies, with which he has been connected for many years, and which he can therefore confidently recommend to investors; whether it is consistent with the duty of postmasters to act as agents on commission for other Societies competing with the Post Office Savings Banks; whether postmasters are authorised to use the address of the post office, and, describing themselves as postmasters, issue circulars recommending societies, such as the Liberator Building Society, as "the best and safest home investments"; and whether it is true as stated that a large number of Post Office Savings Banks are used as offices and as agents for Building and other Investment Societies; if so, does he propose to take any action in the matter?

**THE POSTMASTER GENERAL** (Mr. A. MORLEY, Nottingham, E.): I have seen the letter and article to which the right hon. Gentleman refers; and as the result of such inquiries as I have been able to make, I am informed that the statements made in the first two paragraphs of the question are substantially correct. The postmaster admits having issued advertisements setting forth the advantages of the Societies in question, and giving the post office as his address, but pleads that what

he did was done openly and in good faith, and that he himself and near relatives had invested in the said Societies, and are likely to be losers to the extent of £1,200. In regard to postmasters holding agencies—of course, I refer to those postmasters only who have other business, and whose whole time is not given to their official duties—the general principle laid down for their guidance is that no postmaster shall perform for others any business similar to that which he is required to perform for the Department, and particular classes of business have from time to time been specified, engagement in which would infringe this principle. No order, however, as far as I can ascertain, has yet been issued to postmasters forbidding their connection with Building Societies, possibly because such Societies, having for their chief object the acquisition of leasehold or freehold property by their members, have not been regarded as coming into competition with the Post Office Savings Bank. In regard to the general question of postmasters using the address of the post office, and issuing circulars on other than Post Office business in which they announce themselves as postmasters, it must be borne in mind that to a large number of postmasters the Post Office business is not their sole or even their principal employment, and it might be difficult, if not harsh, to require this class of postmasters to suppress their official title and address in transacting other than Post Office business, provided, of course, it is a legitimate business and does not trench on the business proper to the Post Office. I am not able at present to state whether any considerable number of postmasters are agents for Building or other Investment Societies, but inquiry shall be made, and the whole subject, which is one of great importance, shall receive my most careful attention.

\***MR. JACKSON**: As the right hon. Gentleman is good enough to say he will make inquiries as to the number of postmasters acting as agents for Building and other Investment Societies, will he give us the information in the form of a Return?

**MR. A. MORLEY**: If the right hon. Gentleman will move for a Return I will consider it.

#### VOLUNTEER DRILL HALLS.

**COLONEL HOWARD VINCENT**: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War if he will take steps to have communicated to all Commanding Officers of Volunteers the Judgment pronounced on the 9th instant by the Queen's Bench Division of the High Court of Justice, in the case of Colonel Pearson against the Holborn Union Assessment Committee, that the Volunteer Force are the servants of the Crown in the same sense as the Regular Army and the Militia, and property occupied for Volunteer purposes exclusively is occupation for military purposes, and as such exempt from rates?

\***THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR** (Mr. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN, Stirling, &c.): I have no report of this case more authoritative than appears in the public Press; and that is equally open to the Commanding Officers of Volunteer Corps, who must draw their own conclusions from it.

#### THE MAXIM GUN.

**CAPTAIN BOWLES** (Middlesex, Enfield): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War if the Maxim gun received by the Enfield Royal Small Arms Factory as a pattern to work by was in every way correct with the one held at the Inspection Department as their pattern?

\***MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN**: The gun at Enfield is not there as a pattern to work from, but as a guide in the preparation for the manufacture of mountings. It is, however, in all essential particulars identical with the pattern gun in charge of the Inspection Department.

#### THE CENSUS CLERKS.

**MR. SAUNDERS** (Newington, Walworth): I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board the number of hours overtime worked by Second Division Clerks on piecework in the Census Office, and the total amount paid for such work to the end of January last; also the amount paid to Boy Writers for "Ages and Conditions" and "Occupation" piecework; and whether any piecework had been done by Second Division Clerks since the first batch of temporary Census Clerks were dismissed?

\***MR. H. H. FOWLER** : This question was only put on the Paper this morning, and I must communicate with the Registrar General upon it. At the same time, I may say that, as I am most anxious that the completion of the Census Report should be expedited as much as possible, I should be very unwilling at the present time to impose on the Census Department the task of compiling additional statistical information.

#### THE IRISH LAND PURCHASE AND SETTLEMENT COMPANY.

**MR. T. W. RUSSELL** (Tyrone, S.) : I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether his attention has been called to the remarks in the Report of the Auditor General with regard to the sum of £42,300 due by the Irish Land Purchase and Settlement Company in respect of a loan by the Irish Land Commission, in which he states that, when the company was wound up by an Order of the High Court on 13th August last, it appeared that of the nominal capital of the company—namely, £250,000, only £4,669 5s. was paid up, and that the security held by the Land Commission is totally insufficient to meet the balance of £38,000 due on foot of the mortgage debt of £42,300; and calls special attention to the matter, in view of the terms of Section 13 of "The Tramways and Public Companies (Ireland) Act, 1883," under which the responsibility is laid on the Land Commission of satisfying itself with regard to the constitution of any public company to which an advance is made, and of approving of the security and expediency of the purchase; whether he can state who the Directors of the Irish Land Purchase and Settlement Company were, what shares they held, and how far they may be responsible; and if the objects of the company were in any way achieved?

\***THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY** (Sir J. T. HIBBERT, Oldham) : Yes, Sir; my attention has been called to the Report of the Comptroller and Auditor General referred to. The facts generally are as stated in that Report and the correspondence appended thereto. I do not think that any useful purpose would be served by giving the names of the Directors in reply to a question, but

I shall be ready to forward a list to the hon. Member if he desires to see it. I am afraid I cannot say that the objects of the company were achieved. It would not be convenient, I think, that I should enter at present into further particulars, as the whole matter will form the subject of special inquiry.

**MR. T. W. RUSSELL** : On the first opportunity I will call further attention to this matter.

#### WEIGHING MACHINES AND SCALES.

**MR. FULLER** (Wilts, Westbury) : I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether, having regard to his statement respecting the use of stamped weights and measures, that answer will apply to the use of weighing machines and scales?

**MR. MUNDELLA** : No, Sir; weighing machines and scales, although stamped in the district of one Local Authority, may have to be re-stamped if fixed for use for trade in the district of another Local Authority.

#### THE KACHINS.

**MR. GIBSON BOWLES** (Lynn Regis) : I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether he will lay upon the Table of the House information respecting the cause and origin of the warlike operations now being carried on against the Kachins on the Upper Irrawaddy, adjacent to Burma; whether, since the conclusion of the Treaty with China relative to the Burmese territories lately under the dominion of King Theebaw, Her Majesty's Government have received any representations from the Chinese Government deprecating British interference with the territory of the Kachins; and, if so, whether any, and what, reply has been made to such representations; and whether the information in his possession shows that the continuance of warlike operations against the Kachins may lead to irruptions of Chinese similar to those of the "Black Flags" encountered by the French in Toukin?

\***THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS** (Sir E. GREY, Northumberland, Berwick) : The operations in question were rendered necessary by repeated raids of the Kachin tribes in the hills on the settled villages situated in the plain

country east of the Irrawaddy. An attempt was first made to repress these by punitive expeditions; and as that measure proved insufficient, a more definite attempt was made in 1891 and 1892 to enforce order among the tribes with a view to the safety of the villages under our jurisdiction, and the proper protection of the great trade routes between Yunnan and Mandalay. Representations have been made by the Chinese Government, and explanations have been given in reply, which have been received in a friendly manner. Negotiations are in progress with China for a settlement of the frontier, which it is hoped may shortly be brought to a satisfactory conclusion. It is not desired to continue the operations longer or further than is necessary for the objects already mentioned, and there is no reason to believe that they will give rise to Chinese irruptions of the nature indicated. At this stage of the negotiations it would not be desirable to make the correspondence public.

#### ANSTRUTHER UNION HARBOUR.

**MR. ANSTRUTHER** (St. Andrews, &c.): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether he can give any reply to the Memorial presented to the Commissioners of Her Majesty's Treasury by the Commissioners of the Anstruther Union Harbour last Session, praying for a grant of money for the purposes of the said harbour?

**\*SIR J. T. HIBBERT**: This application has been most carefully considered by the Treasury. I find that over £80,000 has been laid out from moneys provided in one form or other by Parliament, of which £16,500 was lent by the Public Works Loan Commissioners. In addition, the interest on this loan has been remitted up to 18th October, 1892, by Act of Parliament, and the sum remitted was to be deemed a free grant. No re-payment has been made to the Commissioners in respect either of interest or the principal of the loan, and inquiries which have been made appear to show that no contribution to the cost of new works will be forthcoming from local sources, nor does the locality offer any security for a fresh advance by way of loan. The Treasury have come to the conclusion that, in this absence of practi-

cal support to the scheme by the locality chiefly interested, they cannot recommend Parliament to make any further grant to the harbour.

#### CRIMEAN AND INDIAN MUTINY VETERANS.

**MR. BRODRICK** (Surrey, Guildford): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War how many soldiers eligible for special pensions for campaigns before 1860, having been found to comply with the conditions as to service, character, and want of means, laid down by the War Office, have not yet been awarded pensions; and whether he can hold out any hopes that pensions will be given to these men?

**\*MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN**: Our knowledge only extends to the men who have actually applied for these special pensions. Of these there are at present, in addition to the 580 already pensioned, about 1,000 who comply with the conditions laid down by my predecessor and the Treasury. Probably only one-eighth of these will be awarded pensions during the next financial year, unless the provision made on the subject while my hon. Friend was Financial Secretary is extended.

**MR. HANBURY** (Preston): May I ask if any definite date has been fixed before which application must be sent for these pensions?

**MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN**: I am not aware.

**MR. BRODRICK**: Is there any intention of making a proposal to extend the provision for these pensions?

**MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN**: I will inform my hon. Friend on that subject at the proper time.

#### RAILWAY CHARGES FOR THE CONVEYANCE OF MILK.

**SIR JAMES WHITEHEAD** (Leicester): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade if he will inquire of the London and South Western Railway Company whether the letter sent him on the 30th January by the General Manager of the London and South Western Railway Company, in which it is said that they have for the present decided to charge the old rates for the carriage of milk, means that they hold themselves at liberty to increase the

rates again whenever it may please them to do so; and whether he will make a similar inquiry of the Midland Railway Company with regard to the letter from their general manager, dated the 10th February, in which it is stated that they have resolved to revert to the milk rates in operation prior to the end of last year, and to continue them until the 30th June next?

**THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE** (Mr. A. J. MUNDELLA, Sheffield, Brightside): I cannot give a shorter answer than by reading two letters I have received from the London and South Western Railway and the Midland Railway respectively:—

"London and South Western Railway,  
General Manager's Office,  
Waterloo Station, London, S.E.,  
22nd February, 1893.

Sir,—In reply to a communication yesterday's date received from your Department in reference to a question to be put to-morrow to the President of the Board of Trade by Sir James Whitehead, I have to explain that owing to representations having been received by us during the early part of January from several large milk senders, to the effect that there were contracts running, some of which would expire shortly while others would run on to Michaelmas, 1893, we determined to revert to the old rates until that date, when, no doubt, some revision will have to be made more, however, with the object of correcting certain anomalies which have grown up than of making any general advance in rates, which, in the opinion of this company, ought not to be made during a period of agricultural depression.

I am, &c.,

(Signed) CHARLES SCOTTER.

Sir Courtenay Boyle, K.C.B.,  
Board of Trade."

That is all right, so far as it goes. The reply from the Midland Company, as follows, is not quite so satisfactory:—

"Midland Railway,  
General Manager's Office, Derby,  
22nd February 1893.

Dear Sir Courtenay,—With reference to the question of which Sir James Whitehead has given notice, relative to the rates in force upon the Midland Railway for milk traffic, I have to say that the scale of milk rates in force on the Midland Railway is below that adopted on several other lines, and that it is proposed to re-consider the scale and conditions with a view to the adoption, after June 30th next, of a scale less unremunerative and one more fairly and accurately adjusted to distances.

Any alteration which may be determined upon will, of course, be duly published before being put in operation.

Yours, &c.,

(Signed) G. H. TURNER.

Sir Courtenay Boyle, K.C.B.,  
Board of Trade,  
London, S.W."

*Sir James Whitehead*

THE RATHNALOUGH SCHOOLMASTER.

MR. T. W. RUSSELL: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether there is any truth in the report contained in *The Irish Times* of Saturday last, to the effect that a partially boycotted schoolmaster at Rathnalough, County Kerry, had been fired at; whether the parents of the five children who are said to have continued their attendance at the school were visited and warned; and if Murphy was under police protection shortly before the alleged occurrence?

\*THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. J. MORLEY, Newcastle-upon-Tyne): The facts are generally as stated in the first two paragraphs of the question, but there is no foundation for the implication that only five children were in attendance at the school. The number attending on Tuesday last was, I am informed, 33. Murphy was under protection by patrols prior to the occurrence, and it is not true to say that the protection was withdrawn from him.

IRISH CIVIL SERVANTS.

MR. STANLEY LEIGHTON (Shropshire, Oswestry): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland if he will inform the House of the number and value of Civil Service salaries which will be placed at the disposal of the Home Rule Executive in Ireland, in case the Home Rule Bill becomes law?

\*MR. J. MORLEY: I rather deprecate anticipating the Committee stage of the Bill. I fear it would be hardly practicable at the present time to make an approximate statement of the number and value of the salaries referred to.

MR. STANLEY LEIGHTON: Has the right hon. Gentleman no information, or does he think that the information would be prejudicial to the Government if he were to give it, as to the number of the Judges and Civil servants in Ireland who will come within the provisions of Clauses 26 to 29 of the Bill?

\*MR. J. MORLEY: My hon. Friend has the same means of information as myself. He can refer to the Bill and to the Civil Service Estimates.

Mr. SEXTON (Kerry, N.): As the Committee stage has been anticipated by the question, may I ask whether it is not the fact that the salaries and positions of the Judges and all the permanent Civil servants are so guarded by clauses in the Bill that they are not at the disposal of the Home Rule Executive?

[No answer was given.]

#### THE RATING OF CHAPELS AND SCHOOLS.

Mr. STANLEY LEIGHTON: I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board if he can inform the House what is the number of chapels meeting houses, and premises exclusively appropriated to public religious worship, and duly certified for the performance of such religious worship, which under the provisions of the 3 & 4 Will. IV. c. 30, are exempted from rates; and whether the Government will consider the expediency of extending a similar exemption from rateability to elementary schools for public instruction?

\*Mr. H. H. FOWLER: I am informed by the Registrar General that on the 31st December last 27,767 buildings were on the register, as certified by him for religious worship. It is probable, however, that in some cases the buildings are no longer used for this purpose, although they remain on the register in consequence of their disuse not having been reported. The great majority of the buildings, there can be no doubt, are exclusively appropriated to public worship and exempt from rates, but I am unable to give the precise number. The Government are not prepared at present to make any proposals to Parliament extending exemption from rateability.

#### PROCURATORS FISCAL CHARGES.

Dr. MACGREGOR (Inverness-shire): I beg to ask the Lord Advocate if he will endeavour to have the law so amended as to disallow salaried Procurators Fiscal to charge expenses for prosecutions at their instance in the Sheriff Courts and other Inferior Courts in Scotland?

\*The LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. B. BALFOUR, Clackmannan, &c.): It is the practice of the Government to re-

quire that a condition should be inserted in the Commissions granted in favour of Procurators Fiscal, providing that they shall not engage in private practice, and Procurators Fiscal holding office under such Commissions would not be entitled to act as agents in, or to charge fees for, proceedings instituted by private parties in the Local Courts. Where, however, no restriction against private practice exists in the Commission of a Procurator Fiscal, he cannot be prevented from acting as agent for individual clients, provided always that he does nothing in conflict with his public duty. The question is one proper to be dealt with, as it now is, rather by administration than by alteration of the law.

#### THE IRISH LAND SUB-COMMISSION.

Mr. M'GILLIGAN (Fermanagh, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland when a sitting of the Land Sub-Commissioners will take place for the Union of Coleraine, County Londonderry; and is he aware that no sitting has taken place there since 19th October, 1891, and that a number of notices have been served for hearing?

\*Mr. J. MORLEY: I am aware of the fact stated in the last paragraph of the question. The Land Commissioners report that the Land Sub-Commission will sit in Coleraine on the 14th March.

#### THE BAWNMORE.

Mr. JOHNSTON (Belfast, S.): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies whether he has received any further information from Canada concerning the kidnapping of the crew of the Belfast steamship *Bawnmore*, in the harbour of Nanaimo, British Columbia?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES (Mr. S. BUXTON, Tower Hamlets, Poplar): The following telegram, dated the 18th instant, has been received from the Governor General of Canada:—

"Referring to your telegram of 11th February, *Bawnmore* kidnapping case, five persons now on trial at Nanaimo at Special Assizes, Attorney General British Columbia prosecuting. Full information will be sent at conclusion of trial."



# THE LOCAL REGISTRATION OF TITLE (IRELAND) ACT, 1891.

**MR. MAURICE HEALY (Cork):** I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland when it is proposed to fix the allowances to be made to Local Registrars under "The Local Registration of Title (Ireland) Act, 1891," to enable them to discharge the duties cast upon them under that Act; and whether, pending a definite arrangement, and seeing that the Local Registrars have now been discharging duties under the Act for over a year, some payment on account will be made to them in view of the extra clerical assistance which they have had to provide?

**SIR J. T. HIBBERT:** The Treasury is now considering the allowances referred to, and arrangements will be made so that all sums due up to the close of the present financial year, on the basis of the allowances when fixed, may be paid in full before the 31st March next.

## COLCHESTER INFANTRY CAMP.

**CAPTAIN NAYLOR - LEYLAND (Colchester):** I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War if it is the intention of the Government to rebuild the whole of the Infantry Camp at Colchester this year; if it is not their intention, are they aware that the huts are wooden, that they were put up as temporary structures at the time of the Crimean War, and that they are totally unfit for human habitation in the winter time; and in any re-building of the Camp at Colchester, the barracks, or any military building, will the Government undertake that resident builders alone shall be employed?

**\*MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN:** It is not intended to re-build this year the whole Camp at Colchester, but plans are under consideration for re-constructing the lines for one Infantry Battalion. I am aware that the huts are old, but I have no information to the effect that they are unfit for habitation at any time of the year. They will be replaced by degrees. In any re-building tenders will be called for in the usual way, but the competition would not be restricted to local contractors.

# SCHOOL EXPENDITURE ACCOUNTS.

**MR. HERBERT ROBERTS (Denbighshire, W.):** I beg to ask the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education whether his attention has been drawn to the fact that in the Annual Report of the Committee of Council on Education for England and Wales, the expenditure as well as the income is tabulated in the case of Board schools, whereas the income alone is given in the case of schools aided by Parliamentary Grants; and whether, in view of the general application of the Free Education Act, he will take steps to ensure the publication in future Annual Reports of the expenditure of all State-aided schools, to whichever class they belong?

**MR. ACLAND:** The tables given in the Annual Report of the Committee of Council on Education do not show the income and expenditure of Board schools, but the income and expenditure of School Boards, including all charges on the School Fund of the Board, such as interest on building loans, &c. To give the income and expenditure of each school in England and Wales would increase the size of the Annual Report to an unmanageable degree, and would be of comparatively little use unless further details were also given. But a fuller Return, in the form of that ordered by the House in 1890, on the Motion of my right hon. Friend the President of the Board of Trade (Parliamentary Paper 403) is now in course of preparation, and will be issued when the full details for all public elementary schools as to the first complete school year after the coming into operation of the Free Education Act of 1891 have been collected and tabulated.

## TEMPORARY CENSUS CLERKS.

**MR. BOUSFIELD (Hackney, N.):** I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board whether the Return in reference to the employment and pay of temporary Census Clerks has, in fact, been got out; and whether he will lay a Copy of it upon the Table of the House?

**\*MR. H. H. FOWLER:** The statement I made in reply to the question of the hon. Member was not a Return. The particulars given in that reply were furnished by the Registrar General, by whom the facts so far as was necessary

had been ascertained. It would be unusual to submit to the House such a detailed statement as is suggested, and I think it is unnecessary to do so.

#### DUNMANWAY UNION SEED LOAN.

MR. E. BARRY (Cork Co., S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware of the great difficulty which at present exists in the Dunmanway Union in repaying the second instalment of the seed loan; and whether, in view of such difficulty, he will grant a further extension of time for its repayment?

\*MR. J. MORLEY: The first instalment due by this Union has been paid, and the second is in course of collection. The Government are not aware of any sufficient grounds for departing from the usual practice in regard to the payment of this loan.

#### AGRICULTURE IN ESSEX.

MAJOR RASCH (Essex, S.E.): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Agriculture if he can state what amount of land in Essex has gone out of cultivation, i.e., from under plough into rough grass, practically out of tillage, during the last 10 years?

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF AGRICULTURE (MR. H. GARDNER, Essex, Saffron Walden): A comparison of the Agricultural Returns for the year 1892 with those for 1882 shows that in the County of Essex there has been a decrease of 36,861 acres of arable land, an increase of 34,439 acres of permanent pasture, and a decrease of 2,422 acres in the total cultivated area.

#### THE KILIMA-NJARO COMMISSION.

MR. J. W. LOWTHER (Cumberland, Penrith): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether the Kilima-Njaro Delimitation Commission has now completed its labours; and, if so, whether Her Majesty's Government propose to lay any Papers on the subject upon the Table of the House?

\*SIR G. GREY: The delimitation is not complete. Points on which the Commissioners disagreed have been referred for examination by the British and German Governments. Papers cannot, therefore, be laid at present.

#### IRISH TOBACCO TRADE.

MR. TOMLINSON (Preston): I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether, in the event of the Government of Ireland Bill becoming law, there will be a free import of tobacco from Ireland into Great Britain?

\*THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (SIR W. HARCOURT, Derby): If the hon. Member will look at the Bill he will find nothing in it which alters the present condition of things in the matter referred to in the question.

MR. TOMLINSON: Has the right hon. Gentleman considered the strong probability of the smuggling of tobacco from Ireland on a large scale?

[No answer was given.]

#### THE SOLWAY WHITE FISHERY.

SIR MARK STEWART (Kirkcudbright): I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland if it is the intention of the Government to legislate this Session on the Solway White Fishery, either on the lines of the Report of the Commission issued last Session or otherwise?

SIR G. TREVELYAN: The Fishery Bill which will be brought forward very shortly relates to the general deep-sea fisheries of Scotland. When that has been disposed of the Government will do its best to deal with the salmon fisheries, with special reference to the Tweed and to the Solway.

#### RAILWAY RATES.

MR. T. M. HEALY (Louth, N.): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade if he has communicated with the Railway Companies as to whether traders who have signed "owner's risk" notes for the carriage of goods will get the same advantage as may be granted to those who send goods at company's risk, when the rebate promised by the Railway Companies on the new rates is allowed?

MR. MUNDELLA: Yes, Sir; and I have received the following letter from Sir Henry Oakley, the Secretary of the Railway Association:—

"I am authorised by the Association to state that in the event of any alteration of a rate made by the companies, whether the goods are conveyed at the company's or owner's risk,

every trader concerned in the traffic will obtain the advantage of any such revision. That course has already been adopted by the companies."

#### EMPLOYERS' LIABILITY IN FRANCE.

**Mr. STUART-WORTLEY** (Sheffield, Hallam): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether he can give the House any information as to the fate and present position of the Bill to amend the Law relating to the Liability of Employers which was before the French Chamber of Deputies in 1888 and 1890; whether that Bill was proposed by the Government of the day; and whether, if in 1890 or since the Bill became Law, he will present a translation of it to Parliament?

\***SIR E. GREY**: A Bill was laid on the Table of the French Chamber by the Minister of Commerce on June 28th, 1890. It was referred, together with the proposals of numerous other Deputies, to the Commission de Travail, who elaborated another Bill, which is still down for discussion in the Orders of the Day of the Chamber. A translation of the latter will be found on page 148 of a Report on the relations between Capital and Labour in France, No. 258 Miscellaneous Series of Foreign Office Reports.

#### IRISH TITHE RENT-CHARGE.

**Mr. MAURICE HEALY**: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland how much of the total tithe rent-charge of £403,978 per annum mentioned in the Irish Church Commissioners' Report for the year ending 31st December, 1871, has been made available either by regular payments since or by sale; has any, and, if so, what, portion of this rental been claimed under the 70th section of the Church Act as private endowments of chapels; have any of these claims been discussed in open Court or on notice to the localities out of which the rent issues; how much of the total annual revenue mentioned in the said Report has been lost, either as the result of proceedings at Law or by neglect to recover; and were there any other items of annual revenue discovered after the said Report; and, if so, to what amount?

*Mr. Mundella*

\***Mr. J. MORLEY**: Of the total sum of £403,978 mentioned in the question, all has been made available except £139 a year. Portion of the above rental was claimed under the 70th section of the Act of 1869, amounting to £59 per annum. The claim referred to was in respect of certain tithe rent-charges in the benefice of Castledawson, and was admitted by order made in Chambers by Mr. Justice Lawson. The annual rent-charges cancelled as irrecoverable from various causes amounts to £80. The additional rent-charges discovered partly by investigation and partly acquired by purchasing the surrender or assignment of subsisting leases, pursuant to the 33rd section of the Church Act, amounts to £6,000. Further information relative to tithe rent-charge will be found in House of Commons Paper No. 75 of last Session.

#### ALIEN IMMIGRATION.

**Mr. JAMES LOWTHER** (Kent, Thanet): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether, before committing the Government to the cost of despatching Commissioners to the United States to inquire into the question of alien immigration, he procured from the Royal Commission on Labour the Report received by them upon that same subject; and considered its terms?

**Mr. MUNDELLA**: The Report to which the right hon. Gentleman refers has already been printed and circulated. It does not give the full information which the Commissioners appointed by the Board of Trade are instructed to obtain, and which I think it is necessary to place before Parliament for the elucidation of the subject.

**Mr. JAMES LOWTHER**: Will the right hon. Gentleman lay on the Table the instructions to the Commissioners?

**Mr. MUNDELLA**: Yes, Sir.

**Mr. JAMES LOWTHER**: When?

**Mr. MUNDELLA**: As soon as possible.

#### THE TREATMENT OF DESTITUTE SEAMEN.

**Mr. HAVELOCK WILSON** (Middlesbrough): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs if he is aware of the fact that the British Consul at Para, Brazil, refused

to send home two British seamen of the barquentine *Caernarvonshire*, which had been wrecked, on the grounds that they refused to sign articles on a Russian Finn vessel which was not bound for the United Kingdom; if the British Consul was justified in so treating destitute seamen; and whether any steps can be taken to prevent the recurrence of similar grievances?

\*SIR E. GREY: We will inquire. In the absence of knowledge of the facts we cannot form an opinion as to the action of the Consul.

#### THE POMERANIAN.

MR. HAVELOCK WILSON: I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade if his attention has been called to the disaster which recently occurred to the Allan Line steamer *Pomeranian*, in which several of the crew were injured and the vessel compelled to put back, and, if it is his intention (seeing a number of lives were lost) to cause an inquiry to be held with reference to the same, with a view to ascertaining whether the vessel was in a seaworthy condition when she last left the United Kingdom?

MR. MUNDELLA: Inquiry was ordered at once, and will be held on the return of the vessel to the United Kingdom. The question as to the vessel's condition will doubtless be considered at the Inquiry.

MR. HAVELOCK WILSON: Is not the vessel at the present moment lying off Greenock undergoing repairs?

MR. MUNDELLA: I am not aware that it is. I will inquire.

#### CARRICKFERGUS POST OFFICE.

CAPTAIN M'CALMONT (Antrim, E.): I beg to ask the Postmaster General whether a Post Office Superintendent has been in charge of Carrickfergus Post Office since the late postmistress left in the autumn of last year; would he state what is the superintendent's salary per week, and will he have to be continued there till the new postmistress, Miss O'Gorman, has been instructed in her work; and whether this expenditure would have been necessary had Miss Moore been maintained in her appointment?

MR. A. MORLEY: The Carrickfergus Post Office has, since the 1st October last, when the vacancy occurred, been

under the control of a provincial clerk in charge, as usual in such cases, and that officer has been receiving his ordinary salary of 46s. a week during that period. The hon. and gallant Member is mistaken, as I have already informed him, in thinking that Miss Moore was appointed.

#### THE IRISH MAILS.

CAPTAIN M'CALMONT: I beg to ask the Postmaster General how often the mails to the North of Ireland, *viâ* Stranraer, have been late on arrival at Larne since January 1st, 1893; and have such delays been incurred (1) before reaching Carlisle, (2) between Carlisle or Stranraer, or (3) between Stranraer and Larne?

MR. A. MORLEY: Although the mails forwarded to Ireland by way of Stranraer have reached Larne exactly at the appointed time on only very few occasions since the 1st January, the amount of lateness has exceeded 15 minutes on but 23 occasions, and 30 minutes on 13 occasions during the period of 51 days, *i.e.*, from the 1st ultimo to the 20th instant. The delay has been distributed over the whole route. If the hon. and gallant Member wishes it, I will send him detailed particulars.

#### THE DERBY FARMERS AND THE RAILWAY RATES.

MR. JACOBY (Derbyshire, Mid): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade if he has received a communication from the dairy farmers in Derbyshire respecting the serious injury to their trade in consequence of the increased railway rates and charges; and if he will bring pressure to bear upon the Railway Companies in support of their representations?

MR. MUNDELLA: Yes, Sir; I have received a complaint from the Dairy Farmers' Association in Derbyshire, consisting of 500 members, with regard to the increases in railway rates on their produce, and I am in communication with the companies, through the medium of the Railway Association, on the subject, and I will furnish the hon. Member, as soon as possible, with the replies.

## IRISH PETTY SESSIONS.

**MR. JOHN REDMOND** (Waterford): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether it has been brought to his notice that the Petty Sessions District of Kilmanagh, County Kilkenny, is often left for two months at a time without any Court being held, owing to the non-attendance of Justices; and whether he will give his consideration to the matter?

\***MR. J. MORLEY**: I learn that during the 12 months ended the 31st December last the Petty Sessions, which are held once a month only, fell through once on account of the non-attendance of magistrates.

## SHIPS SIDE-LIGHTS.

**VISCOUNT BURY** (Birkenhead): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he has communicated with all the Powers represented at the Washington Conference to obtain their approval of and assent to the Regulations in the recent Order of the Privy Council on the Screening of Ships Side-lights; and, if not, whether he will at once do so in order to make the position of British shipowners secure in Foreign Courts of Law, and in the meantime suspend the operation of the Privy Council Order?

**MR. MUNDELLA**: The Regulations referred to by the noble Lord are Regulations interpreting our present Rules, and therefore the approval of Foreign Powers is not a necessary condition precedent to their issue. It is, however, intended to communicate at once the recent Order in Council to the Powers represented at the Washington Conference, so that the position of British shipowners may be known to them. There appears to be no sufficient reason for suspending the operation of the Order.

**MR. HOUSTON** (Liverpool, West Toxteth): Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that danger is likely to arise from the fact that the Regulations observed by British vessels differ from those followed by foreign vessels?

**MR. MUNDELLA**: I cannot answer a technical question like that without notice.

## HOUGHTON-LE-SPRING CEMETERY.

**CAPTAIN FENWICK** (Durham, Houghton-le-Spring): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether his attention has been called to the fact that, owing to the crowded state of the old cemetery at Houghton-le-Spring, it is impossible to carry out the proper burying regulations; and whether he will send a Government Inspector to report on the same, with a view to ordering it to be closed, seeing that a new cemetery has been provided out of the rates at a request made by the parish vestry in 1889?

**THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT** (**MR. ASQUITH**, Fife, E.): My attention had not been called to this case before the question of my hon. Friend was put; but I will cause all proper inquiries to be made, and if I find it is necessary, I will send a Government Inspector down in order that he may make a full Report.

## REGISTRATION AND TENANCY TERMS.

**MR. STOREY** (Sunderland): I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board whether he is aware that over a considerable portion of England the terms for tenancy end in May, August, November, and February; and that May term, being in fine weather, is very popular for removal; and whether it is possible in this portion to make the dates for registration practically the same as those in the Scotch Bill?

\***MR. H. H. FOWLER**: I am aware that the general rule as to changing tenancies, other than weekly tenancies, on the usual quarter days does not prevail in some of the Northern Counties. The matter will receive my most careful consideration.

## MILITARY OFFICERS IN CIVIL EMPLOY.

**MR. ROBERT WALLACE** (Edinburgh, E.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War if he can state how many officers on the active list of the Army are at present in the employment of Trading Companies; on what terms; and by whose permission; whether any compensation to the public revenue is charged against such companies for the services so granted; whether, in making such loans of public services, any difference is

recognised between the applications of companies incorporated by Royal Charter and ordinary Joint Stock Companies under the Companies Acts ; whether, while engaged as agents for such Companies, such officers are specially authorised to represent Her Majesty or the Government ; and whether Her Majesty's Commission to such officers invests them with any representative character outside the sphere of their military duties while in actual performance, or any such character at all ?

**\*MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN :** There are nine such officers. They serve by permission of the Secretary of State, receive no pay from Army funds, and on retirement will be subjected to a reduction from their retired pay of £5 for each year of such seconded service. Presumably this loss is made good to the officers by the companies employing them, but no other charge is made against the companies. As only Chartered Companies employ officers in this way, the question of the comparative treatment of their applications and those of other companies has not arisen. Officers thus employed represent the companies employing them and no other authority by virtue of their Military Commissions.

**MR. HUNTER (Aberdeen, N.) :** Does the right hon. Gentleman's answer apply to officers who are Directors of public companies ?

**MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN :** I do not know. My hon. Friend had better give notice of that question.

**MR. HANBURY :** Can the right hon. Gentleman say whether the Directors referred to by the hon. Member have obtained permission from the War Office in the same way as the Directors serving the Trading Companies.

**MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN :** Officers serving the Chartered Companies in Africa and elsewhere are completely taken away from their military duties, and they naturally have to obtain the permission of the War Office to be so absent. I do not know that the position of a Director of an ordinary company is inconsistent with the performance of military duties.

**MR. HANBURY :** But do officers who serve as Directors of companies have to get permission to do so from the War Office in the same way as officers serving Chartered Companies ?

**MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN :** I must ask for notice of that question.

ELPHINSTONE HIGH SCHOOL, BOMBAY.

**MR. KEAY (Elgin and Nairn) :** I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India whether the Secretary of State has received a Memorial, dated last October, from Mr. Oliver, Head Master of the High School, Ahmedabad, in the Presidency of Bombay, regarding the appointment of Principal of the Elphinstone High School at Bombay, and, if so, what reply has been given thereto ; whether he is aware that Mr. Oliver has served with distinction in the Bombay Educational Department for 18 years, having for 10 years acted as Professor of English Literature in the Elphinstone and Deccan Colleges, and also as Vice Principal of the Elphinstone High School in Bombay for five years ; whether he is aware that in December last the Government of Bombay gazetted to the appointment of Principal of the Elphinstone High School in Bombay a Mr. Prior, who has only been employed in the department for two years, and only in subordinate posts ; and whether he can state the reason why the appointment in question has been conferred on Mr. Prior in supercession of an officer so greatly his senior in the Service ?

**\*SIR E. GREY :** The Secretary of State received the Memorial, and replied that he declined to interfere on Mr. Oliver's behalf. Mr. Oliver is the Head Master of the Ahmedabad High School. He has been more than 19 years in Government service, and has held acting appointments, as indicated in the question. Mr. Prior, whom the Government of Bombay have appointed Principal of the Elphinstone High School in Bombay, was Head Master of the Poona High School, an appointment not more subordinate than that of Head Master of the Ahmedabad School. He has been upwards of three years in the Service, and the Bombay Government (with whom lies the making of all such appointments), acting on Official Reports and the recommendation of the Head of the Educational Department, were of opinion that the interests of the public were best served by the appointment of Mr. Prior.

"BONÂ FIDE" TRAVELLERS.

MR. JOHNSTON : I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether his attention has been called to the case "*Penn v. Alexander*," raised before the Queen's Bench Division on the 4th February on appeal from the Northampton Quarter Sessions, in which it was decided that persons travelling to obtain beer were not *bonâ fide* travellers within the meaning of 37 and 38 Vic. c. 49 ; and whether this law is applicable to Ireland ; and, if so, whether he will give instructions to the Royal Irish Constabulary to exercise a vigilant supervision over publicans who have houses outside Belfast and Dublin, and who supply liquor to so-called *bonâ fide* travellers ?

\*MR. J. MORLEY : The same law is applicable to Ireland, and the Constabulary have been directed to carry out this provision of the Act.

SWAZILAND.

BARON HENRY DE WORMS (Liverpool, East Toxteth) : I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies whether it is a fact that Colonel Martin has been sent on a special Mission to the Queen Regent of Swaziland ; whether such Mission has for its object to induce the Queen Regent to modify or surrender the position guaranteed to the Swazis by the Treaties of 1884 and 1890 ; and whether, in the event of Her Majesty's Government contemplating the non-renewal of the Treaty of 1890, and assenting to the annexation of Swaziland by the South African Republic, Papers will be presented, and an opportunity given to the House to discuss the question prior to such assent being given ?

DR. CLARK (Caithness) : I will, at the same time, ask whether it is the case that a message is being sent to the Queen Regent of Swaziland ; and, if so, whether he will state the character of the message ?

MR. S. BUXTON : Colonel Martin has not been sent on a special Mission ; but, as Resident British Commissioner in Swaziland, he will, on returning from leave of absence, have an interview with the Queen Regent. Having had the honour of being presented to Her Majesty the Queen during his recent visit to this

country, he will assure the Queen Regent of Her Majesty's friendly feeling. The communication is devoid of all political significance. The answer to the second part of the question of the right hon. Gentleman is, No. In reference to the third part of his question, I should have thought the right hon. Gentleman's official experience would have taught him that it is not possible for me, at the present moment, to add anything to the answers I have already given on the subject.

BARON H. DE WORMS : Referring to the last portion of the hon. Gentleman's answer, I would ask him whether he is aware that a similar request was, made for Papers relating to the Swaziland Treaty of 1890 on August 4 of that year by the right hon. Gentleman the present Chancellor of the Duchy, in these words—

"Considering the importance of the matter, it is most desirable that the Papers should be printed before the discussion comes on,"

and that the late First Lord of the Treasury replied—"Papers similar in character will be laid on the Table"; and whether Her Majesty's Government decline to follow that precedent ?

MR. S. BUXTON : I hope we shall be able to lay Papers on the Table before the discussion comes on. If we can we will do so, but at what time depends on the progress of Public Business.

THE AGRICULTURAL INQUIRY.

DR. CLARK : I beg to ask the President of the Board of Agriculture whether the proposed Select Committee on Depression of Agriculture will include Scotland in the area of its inquiry ?

MR. GARDNER : Yes, Sir ; as I stated the other day, in reply to my hon. Friend the Member for East Aberdeenshire, the inquiry will naturally include Scotland in its scope.

LIMERICK'S MAYOR.

MR. O'KEEFFE (Limerick) : I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland if, following the precedent in the case of the Lord Mayor of Dublin, he will advise the restoration of the name of the Mayor of Limerick to the Commission for the holding of the Assizes, in accordance with the ancient custom of that city ?

\***MR. J. MORLEY** : The Lord Lieutenant's Warrant of October 20 last to the Lord Chancellor directed that the Mayor of Limerick, in common with the mayors of other provincial cities, shall be associated with the Judges in the Commissions of Assize.

#### MILLBANK PRISON.

**MR. EDWARD H. BAYLEY** (Camberwell, N.) : I beg to ask the First Commissioner of Works whether he is aware, as has been stated at a recent public meeting, that much valuable public property is being destroyed at Millbank Prison in the shape of large blocks of stone and York landings which are thrown from considerable heights and broken to pieces, instead of being removed by skilled men and lowered by tackle with a view to being re-worked ; and that old material is being sold privately and no proper account kept ; and what steps he will take to investigate the matter ?

**THE FIRST COMMISSIONER OF WORKS** (Mr. SHAW LEFEVRE, Bradford, Central) : Five-sixths of the materials of Millbank Prison are being pulled down and sold by persons who are buying those parts of the building by auction. I understand that in many cases it is found cheaper to throw the blocks of stone down rather than to incur the expense of using tackle for lowering them, as the stones are almost unsaleable. Strict account is kept of all the material sold by the Office of Works, whether by auction or private contract.

#### THE CARRIAGE OF OIL CAKE.

**MR. MYERS** (Winchester) : I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he is aware that the South Western Railway Company have raised their rates for the carriage of oil cake ; and, if so, whether he will take steps to compel the Company to revert to their former rates and to refund the overcharge ?

**MR. MUNDELLA** : Yes, Sir ; I have received some complaints as regards the rates charged by the London and South Western Railway Company for the carriage of oil cake, and I am in communication with the Railway Association on the subject in the usual way. I have no power to compel the Company

to revert to their former rates and to refund the overcharge ; but I trust that they will make the concession. Sir H. Oakley has assured me that the revised rates will be applied retrospectively to 1st January.

**THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND** (Mr. J. MORLEY, Newcastle-upon-Tyne) : During the years 1891-92 the Petty Sessions referred to were adjourned on three occasions, owing to the non-attendance of magistrates, and on two such occasions the Courts were adjourned in succession. I have received a Report in regard to the second paragraph of the question, and will bring the matter under the notice of the Lord Chancellor.

#### DROGHEDA SANITARY AUTHORITY.

**DR. AMBROSE** (Louth, S.) : I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland if he will state why the Local Government Board has not forwarded the fourth instalment of the loan of £3,000 to the Sanitary Authority of Drogheda ?

\***MR. J. MORLEY** : Application for the issue of the fourth instalment of the loan was made in September last, and the Local Government Board having asked the Sanitary Authority for a statement of the work done and expenditure incurred under the loan, the requisite particulars were not furnished to the Board till the 21st ultimo. It has since transpired that the return of expenditure was incorrectly filled up, and the Report of the Board's Chief Engineering Inspector—a necessary preliminary to the issue of the fourth instalment—has in consequence been delayed. Should this Report be satisfactory the further instalment will be paid.

#### CONTEMPT OF COURT.

#### REGISTRATION OF VOTERS (SCOTLAND) BILL.

**MR. RENSHAW** (Renfrew, W.) : I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland whether, in view of the serious effect which the Registration of Voters (Scotland) Bill is calculated to have on the collection of rates by the parochial, county, and municipal authorities in Scotland, he will delay taking the Second Reading until those authorities have had an opportunity of expressing their opinions in regard to it ?



SIR G. TREVELYAN: Sir, the rate-paying clauses of Franchise Acts were not framed with the intention of facilitating the collection of rates, and it is a question which the Government cannot consider from that point of view.

on the 4th February on appeal from the Northampton Quarter Sessions, in which it was decided that persons travelling to obtain beer were not *bonâ fide* travellers within the meaning of 37 and 38 Vic. c. 49; and whether this law is applicable to Ireland; and, if so, whether he will give instructions to the Royal Irish Constabulary to exercise a vigilant supervision over publicans who have houses outside Belfast and Dublin, and who supply liquor to so-called *bonâ fide* travellers?

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members of certain outside Associations of which the Body named in the question is one. I regret to say that the privilege was in some cases taken advantage of to make false statements both to the prisoners and to the outside public, and I have been obliged to grant the permission more sparingly, and for the present to suspend visits from persons who are not relatives or friends of prisoners.

MR. J. E. REDMOND: As this is a very important matter I wish to ask a supplementary question. It is, whether the right hon. Gentleman is aware, not

only that a number of these prisoners have their relatives on the other side of the world, but that in the case of others their relatives are poor people, unable to pay the large cost of travelling to Portland; whether, as a matter of fact, some of these prisoners remain for a considerable number of years without receiving a single visit from the outside world; whether he is aware that the Association to which I have referred has as one of its chief objects to provide sufficient money to enable visitors to travel to Portland; and whether he will not relax the restriction he has put upon these visits, and so arrange matters that the prisoners may receive a visit every three months unless they have by their own misconduct lost their right to a visit?

MR. ASQUITH: What the hon. Gentleman has said is perfectly true. Some of these men have no relatives or friends in the United Kingdom, and in the case of others the relatives are unable to afford the expense of making periodical visits. I have been most anxious to afford every facility I reasonably could to persons to make visits; and when I am satisfied that in any particular case that can be done without risk, either to the prisoner or to the other interests with which I am charged, I shall be most happy to grant permission in the future as in the past.

MR. J. E. REDMOND: May I ask, whether in the cases of refusal referred to by the right hon. Gentleman, permission was withheld on the ground that there was objection to the particular visitor for whom it was asked.

MR. ASQUITH; No.

MR. J. E. REDMOND: Then on what ground was the refusal based?

MR. ASQUITH: I have already informed the House of the fact that the practice had been abused, and therefore it seemed to me to be right to impose these restrictions.

MR. J. E. REDMOND: Am I to understand that the fact that the practice was abused in the past will be held to be a sufficient reason for withholding visits in the future?

MR. ASQUITH; No; I have already said I will consider any applications made,

H.M.S. *HOWE*.

LORD GEORGE HAMILTON (Middlesex, Ealing): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty if he could state what is the latest information received as to the position and condition of *H.M.S. Howe*?

THE SECRETARY TO THE ADMIRALTY (Sir U. KAY-SHUTTLEWORTH, Lancashire, Clitheroe): A telegram was received yesterday evening from the senior naval officer at Ferrol. The coal, ammunition, and all removable weights are being got out of the fore part of the ship, which is now clear of water; but the main pumping operations are suspended till the next spring tides. In the meantime, the question of blocking the ship up, as she rights to eight degrees, is being considered, with a view of placing mats and sails under her star-board side. Arrangements are also in progress to employ air pressure to force the water out, should pumping operations ultimately fail. The Board of Admiralty are satisfied that every effort is being made by the Salvage Company, who, on their part, continue to entertain confident hopes of getting the ship safely into the dock at Ferrol.

SIR JOHN GORST (Cambridge University): Will the Papers relative to the stranding of the *Howe* be laid on the Table before the Naval Estimates come on?

SIR U. KAY-SHUTTLEWORTH: The House has ordered the printing of the Papers, which are very voluminous. A message has been sent to the printers to use all possible haste, but I am afraid the printing will take a considerable time.

NEWTOWN HAMILTON PETTY SESSIONS.

MR. EDWARD M'HUGH (Armagh, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland how many times has the Newtown Hamilton Petty Sessions Court been adjourned within the past two years owing to the non-attendance of the magistrates, thus causing considerable expense and inconvenience, and is it a fact that two Courts were adjourned in succession; is he aware that four out of the five magistrates for the district reside from five to eight miles from the town of Newtown Hamilton, one of those gentlemen resides

in Dublin, another is incapacitated through deafness, a third nearly always travelling abroad, and a fourth confined in a lunatic asylum; and if he will see that this state of things will be remedied at an early date?

\*THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. J. MORLEY, Newcastle-upon-Tyne): During the years 1891-92 the Petty Sessions referred to were adjourned on three occasions, owing to the non-attendance of magistrates, and on two such occasions the Courts were adjourned in succession. I have received a Report in regard to the second paragraph of the question, and will bring the matter under the notice of the Lord Chancellor.

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CONTEMPT OF COURT.

MR. MATTHEW KENNY (Tyrone, Mid): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland if his attention has been called to the case of Robert Sproule, a farmer, who has been for more than 12 months in Londonderry Gaol a prisoner for contempt of Court, which consisted in withdrawing from an agreement to become a joint surety for the payment of bankruptcy dividends in the case of a neighbour of his who failed for some small amount; if three other co-sureties, although guilty of similar contempt of Court, have been

imprisoned or otherwise punished; and if anything can be done to determine Sproule's punishment?

\*MR. J. MORLEY: I am informed by the Chief Registrar of the Court of Bankruptcy that Robert Sproule, who has been in prison for the period stated, gave, with three other persons, an undertaking—which was made a rule of Court—to sign certain composition bills. The Court subsequently made an order requiring Sproule and his co-sureties to sign these bills, and on their refusal to do so warrants were issued for their arrest. Sproule alone was arrested, the others evaded arrest. I believe it is open to him to obtain release by signing the bills, but the matter is not one in which the Executive can interfere.

MR. M. KENNY: Seeing that this man has been in gaol for a period of more than 12 months, without trial, for a trivial offence, and that the *habeas corpus* has been practically suspended in his case, will the right hon. Gentleman consider the introduction of legislation to terminate this abuse of the process of contempt of Court?

MR. J. MORLEY: I will consider the matter.

#### SECOND DIVISION CIVIL SERVICE CLERKS.

SIR FREDERICK DIXON-HARTLAND (Middlesex, Uxbridge): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury will he explain why a considerable number of the recommendations for the promotion of clerks of the Second Division of the Civil Service which have been submitted to the Treasury by Heads of Departments during the last two years have so far not been considered; and whether, in view of the dissatisfaction prevalent in the Second Division of the Civil Service, steps can now be taken to expedite the Treasury decision on these recommendations?

\*SIR J. T. HIBBERT: Recommendations are made from time to time to the Treasury for the appointment of Second Division clerks to superior posts, and also for promotion of specially meritorious clerks of that Division to the higher grade of the Second Division. As far as I am aware, there are no recommendations for the first-named class of appointment in suspense. The Treasury

are specially responsible for the second named class—namely, promotion to the higher grade—and decisions upon them require much consideration. Several recommendations have been decided, and others now under discussion will, I hope, be shortly settled.

SIR F. DIXON-HARTLAND: Arising out of the question, may I ask how many appointments have been made from the Second Division?

\*SIR J. T. HIBBERT: I am not able to state the exact total, but a considerable number of promotions have been made, and others are under consideration.

#### LORD KENMARE AND HIS TENANTS.

MR. SHEEHAN (Kerry, E.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland if he is aware that Lord Kenmare, through his agent, has served notice on the High Sheriff of Kerry not to execute any civil bill decree for arrears of Poor Rate against tenants on his property until there had been paid to him under the Statute 9 Anne, c. 8, such arrears not exceeding one year's rent as may be due at the date of seizure; if he is aware that the rate collectors for the Killarney Board of Guardians have on several occasions applied for a magistrate's warrant to levy the amount of rates due as provided by the Irish Poor Relief Acts, and that the magistrates of the district (of whom Lord Kenmare's agent is one) have persistently refused to issue their warrant; if he will state whether the Justices in so refusing have acted legally; and what steps the Irish Government intend to take in the matter?

\*MR. J. MORLEY: I understand that it is true that decrees for rates obtained against tenants of Lord Kenmare cannot be executed owing to the fact that the notice indicated in the question has been served on the High Sheriff in every case in which the tenant owes rent. It is not, however, a fact that the magistrates refused to sign warrants for the execution of decrees for rates. They refused to address the warrants to the police, and in this respect they conformed to the general practice. The landlord is apparently acting within his rights under the Statute 9 Anne, cap 8, but whether this enactment conforms to modern ideas is another matter.

**MR. M. KENNY :** Are not the collectors of the rates entitled to insist that the warrant should be executed ?

**MR. J. MORLEY :** I cannot answer that.

#### PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE.

**MR. BRUNNER** (Cheshire, Northwich) : I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether Her Majesty's Government are prepared to recommend to the House amendments of the Standing Orders which shall provide, in accordance with the recommendation of the Select Committee on Parliamentary Procedure of the year 1886, of which the Marquess of Hartington was Chairman, that the practice of Mr. Speaker asking, after leave to bring in a Bill, "Who will prepare and bring in the said Bill?" be dispensed with, and that the presentation of Bills and of Reports from the Bar by Members walking up the floor to the Table be discontinued, and further that Government Bills may, at the option of the Government, be read a first time without Debate.

**MR. JOHN ELLIS** (Nottingham, Rushcliffe) : I beg, at the same time, to ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether the Government is prepared to recommend such a modification of Standing Order No. I. (Sittings of the House) as will place it beyond the power of a single Member to prevent the transaction of any particular business when it is the evident and general sense of the House that it should be proceeded with ?

**THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY** (Mr. W. E. GLADSTONE, Edinburgh, Midlothian) : There are several points in the Standing Orders which stand for consideration when the opportunity arises. I should be very glad if, without any change in the Rules of the House, the Government could have the same facilities for the first stage of a Bill as are enjoyed by private Members ; but we do not propose at present to take any positive step for initiating the subject by a series of changes in the Standing Orders.

#### ORANGEMEN AND HOME RULE.

**MR. JOHNSTON :** I beg, as an Orangeman of 45 years' standing, to ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether, under the proposed Government of Ireland Bill, the Irish Legislature would

have power to attempt to suppress the Orange Institution in Ireland ?

**MR. W. E. GLADSTONE :** If the example of the hon. Member is followed every member of every Society in Ireland may rise and say as being a member of such and such a Society of so many years' standing, he asks so and so. The hon. Gentleman seems to suppose that there is in the Bill some special legislation in regard to the Orange Society. I am not aware of anything of the kind. If the Bill affects Orange Societies it affects all Societies alike, and I think the time for considering whether that power requires any limitation will be when we come to the discussion of the Bill in Committee.

#### WELSH LAND TENURE.

**MR. KENYON** (Denbigh, &c.) : I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether there are any specific reasons why questions relating to the tenure of land in Wales should not be referred to the Committee which is to be nominated by the President of the Board of Agriculture instead of to a Royal Commission ; whether the Government still adheres to its intention to appoint a Royal Commission ; and, if so, when the names of the Commissioners will be made public ; and whether he will undertake that the Chairman of the Commission shall have an accurate and complete knowledge of the Welsh language ?

**MR. W. E. GLADSTONE :** The Government have been busy with the preliminary arrangements connected with the issue of a Commission. As to the question of the alternative between a Commission and a Committee, I believe I am correct in saying that the public sentiment of Wales is very strongly indeed in favour of a Commission, and that one of the reasons on which that sentiment is founded is the difference of language, for which it is much more difficult to make provision in a Committee than on a Commission. The Government have adopted the sentiment of Wales on this point. We have made progress in considering the names of those who shall compose the Commission, and I hope no long time will elapse before we are able to announce them, together with the Instruction to the Commission. As respects the last part of the question of the hon. Gentle-

man, we do not agree with him that the Chairman of the Commission should be specially marked out as a person intimately acquainted with both languages. What we do think is that there ought to be ample provision made in the composition of the Commission for a full command of the Welsh language, so that no inconvenience may accrue to any of the parties in respect of the tongue.

#### THE PROPOSED IRISH LEGISLATURE.

**MR. JOHNSTON** : I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether, under the Government of Ireland Bill, it is proposed that the Legislature should meet in Belfast or Dublin ; and if in Dublin, whether compulsory powers will be given to acquire the Bank of Ireland, or whether the Legislature will sit in Dublin Castle ?

**MR. W. E. GLADSTONE** : The intention of the framers of the Bill, so far as they are entitled to express it in this matter, is—and certainly their expectation is—that the Legislature for Ireland shall meet and sit in Dublin ; but with regard to the particular arrangements for its accommodation, we can offer no opinion before we get to the Second Reading of our Bill, and perhaps for some time after that.

**MR. W. REDMOND** (Clare, E.) : May I ask the right hon. Gentleman whether in this regard he would consider the strong claim of the historical neighbourhood of Ireland known as Ballykilbeg ?

**MR. JOHNSTON** : We will not have it there.

#### IRISH MEMBERS IN THE IMPERIAL PARLIAMENT.

**MR. GIBSON BOWLES** : I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether, having regard to Clause 9, Section 3, Sub-Section (e) of the Irish Government Bill, 1893, which prohibits Irish Representative Peers in the House of Lords and Members of the House of Commons for an Irish constituency from deliberating or voting on any Motion or Resolution which is incidental to any vote or appropriation of money made exclusively for some service not mentioned in the third Schedule to this Act, such Peers and Members for Irish constituencies will be debarred from either de-

liberating or voting on any vote or appropriation of money made for the service of the Customs or Excise Department, neither of which is mentioned in the third Schedule, or from either deliberating or voting on any Motion or Resolution fixing the rates of Customs or Excise, or on any Motion or Resolution incidental to Customs or Excise ?

**MR. W. E. GLADSTONE** : Undoubtedly it is the intention and desire of the framers of the Bill that Irish Members should be entitled to vote on any question that may arise in connection with the Estimates for the Customs service in Ireland, that being a tax which is levied in Ireland, and the inhibition in the Bill being directed to taxes that are not so levied. With regard to the Excise, I think the hon. Gentleman is under some misapprehension, because we have no Excise service in Ireland, according to the plan of the Bill, inasmuch as the whole collection of the Excise is to be regulated under the direction of the Irish Government. As to varying the rates, no doubt, according to the terms of the Bill, it is expressly declared that the rates of Customs and Excise, as well as those of the Postal Department, are to be fixed by the Imperial Parliament, and being fixed in that way for the Irish Service, of course the Irish Members would vote upon them.

#### TITHE REDEMPTION.

**MR. JEFFREYS** (Basingstoke) : I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether he proposes this Session to introduce a measure dealing with tithe redemption, in accordance with the unanimous Report of the Royal Commission on Redemption of Tithe issued last year ?

**MR. W. E. GLADSTONE** : It will be impossible for the Government to undertake legislation on this subject during the present Session.

#### THE AGRICULTURAL INQUIRY.

**MR. CHAPLIN** (Lincolnshire, Sleaford) : When does the Government intend to move the appointment of the Committee to inquire and report on the agricultural depression ?

**MR. H. GARDNER** : To-night, I hope.

*Mr. W. E. Gladstone*

## THE PROGRESS OF BUSINESS.

**MR. CHANNING** (Northampton, E.): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether, having regard to the urgent necessity of making sufficient progress at an early period of the Session with the Registration Bill, Welsh Suspensory Bill, Parish Councils Bill, and other Government measures, to insure legislation this Session, he will consider the advisability of taking either the whole of Tuesday or Friday for Government Business, or of beginning immediately with Morning Sittings for Government Business on both Tuesdays and Fridays?

**MR. W. E. GLADSTONE**: It may be convenient for me to take this opportunity of stating the intention of the Government with regard to Public Business. It is our intention on Monday to propose that we should become sharers in the public time available on Tuesdays and Fridays by means of Morning Sittings. We shall ask for that power from the House, as it was asked for by the late Government last year, till Easter, when the matter may be re-considered. I have also an announcement to make with regard to these Morning Sittings, which may convey some satisfaction to the minds of Independent Members. The old Rule was that on Fridays at 9 o'clock, after a Morning Sitting, the Government were responsible for making and keeping a House. That Rule has by some process, which I will not attempt to explain, fallen into disuse and neglect. We propose to revive that Rule, and make ourselves responsible for making and keeping a House on Fridays. With respect to the Evening Sitting on Tuesday, we propose to go as far as to be responsible for making a House at 9 o'clock. Then, Sir, we propose on Monday to take, first, the introduction of the Local Veto Bill and, second, the Employers' Liability Bill. I do not mean to draw any absolute line as to all these Bills; but after they are disposed of, we propose to go forward with the Supplementary Estimates in Supply, and to make them the Main Business as nearly as we can till they are disposed of.

**MR. SETON-KARR** (St. Helen's): May I ask whether the Government cannot give a little more time for the consideration of the Employers' Liability Bill, or does the right hon. Gentleman

seriously mean to consider it along with two or three other important measures on Monday night?

**MR. GOSCHEN** (St. George's, Hanover Square): I desire, also, to ask whether the notice given by the right hon. Gentleman for taking the time of the House will be confined to the Financial Business of the House according to the precedent set by the late Government last year? I wish further to ask whether it will not be possible for the right hon. Gentleman to bring on his Motion on Tuesday, rather than on Monday, in view of the great interest that is taken in the Motion with reference to bimetallism, which stands on the Paper for Tuesday night? The time available between 9 o'clock and midnight will, as the right hon. Gentleman must be aware, be quite inadequate for the discussion of such an important subject. In view of the International Monetary Conference having been postponed, it is urgent that the matter should be brought to a head, as the action of members of the Conference may, to some extent, be determined by the attitude of the House, seeing that the Government have entered into negotiations with other countries on the question. The matter really deserves the earnest attention of the Government.

**MR. W. E. GLADSTONE**: It appears to me the remarks of the right hon. Gentleman partake rather of the nature of argument than of a question. We are compelled to look to the condition of Public Business as a whole, and we do not think that there was any failure to deal with the question of bimetallism on the occasion when it was discussed last year. The lamented Leader of the House at that date made a speech which appeared to me to contribute very largely, indeed, towards the conclusion of the Debate. However, I do not intend to enter into that argument; but I may say that the Government feel it to be their duty, looking at the condition of Business at the present time, to go forward with the notice which I have given. Hon. Gentlemen will appreciate the pledge that has been entered into for the first time on the part of the Government with regard to making a House when it meets at 9 o'clock.

MR. GOSCHEN : And with regard to Financial Business, will the precedent of last year be followed ?

MR. W. E. GLADSTONE : No, Sir ; we do not think any great convenience would be gained by that arrangement, and I think we had better leave matters where they are.

MR. SETON-KARR : I hope the right hon. Gentleman will give an answer to my question as to the Employers' Liability Bill.

MR. W. E. GLADSTONE : If there were a general desire on the part of the House, it would be the duty of the Government to take account of it ; but I am bound to say that I do not think that is the case. As far as the Second Reading of the Bill is concerned, there is, I believe, a very general desire to see it read a second time.

\*MR. SETON-KARR : Am I to understand that the right hon. Gentleman seriously proposes to discuss the rights of private Members, the question of the Direct Veto, Employers' Liability, and a portion of Supply on the same day ?

MR. W. E. GLADSTONE : Yes, Sir.

#### THE RELATIONS BETWEEN GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND.

MR. GIBSON BOWLES : I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether he can state, with reference to Clause 3, Section 4, of the Irish Government Bill, 1893, the prohibition thereby of the Irish Legislature from making laws "in respect of the relations between different parts of Her Majesty's dominions" will entirely debar the Irish Legislature from dealing by enactment with the relations between Ireland and Great Britain ; and whether under Clause 33, which gives to the Irish Legislature power to repeal or alter any provision of this Act, expressly made alterable by that Legislature, and also any enactments in force in Ireland, except such as either relate to matters beyond the powers of the Irish Legislature, or being enacted by Parliament after the passing of this Act may be expressly extended to Ireland, the Irish Legislature will have power to repeal or alter any provision either of Clause 3 or of Clause 4 of the Bill ?

MR. W. E. GLADSTONE : I am not sure that I understand the first part of the question. I cannot understand

how, with the Preamble he has stated in his question, the hon. Gentleman can really have any doubt of what I must state in reply—namely, that there will be no power whatever in the Irish Legislature to make any change in Clause 3 and Clause 4 of the Bill.

MR. CLANCY : May I ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer when the Return relating to the financial relations between Great Britain and Ireland for the last three years will be ready ?

SIR W. HARCOURT : I hope very soon.

MR. GOSCHEN : I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether he will be good enough, in anticipation of more detailed figures, to explain in general terms the difference between the Estimate of £63,352,000 for Expenditure on Imperial purposes for the year 1891–2, adopted in the Treasury Return (Financial Relations) presented in 1891, and the Estimate of £59,000,000 adopted by him as the amount of Imperial Expenditure for the purpose of financial adjustment between Great Britain and Ireland, under the Government of Ireland Bill ; and if he can state whether the lower figure is mainly due to a revised classification of items to be treated as Imperial, or to anticipated reductions in the amounts of those items ?

MR. W. E. GLADSTONE : The Estimate of £59,000,000 represents a probable net Expenditure in the current financial year. The £63,352,000 is the estimated gross Expenditure for the previous year 1891–2, and it is subject to the following principal reductions :—First of all, the receipts which may be classified as Imperial are £1,616,000 in excess ; next, the actual issues of 1891–2 were less than was anticipated by £490,000 ; whilst the cost of the Yeomanry and Volunteers, which may be considered British affairs, may be taken at £1,000,000. The year 1891–2 contains an extraordinary coinage of £400,000. Lastly, the remaining difference is due to the fact that the figures relate to different years, and that it was necessary to make certain alterations in the scheme produced in the Bill. I venture to submit, although the right hon. Gentleman's question is a perfectly fair and regular one, that it would be a great advantage if hon. Members, in making inquiries as to the contents of the Bill,

would exercise a good deal of reserve, so that we shall not be called upon to give full explanations of what is in the Bill at this time.

**SIR FREDERICK DIXON-HARTLAND :** I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury how he proposes to deal with the Post Office and its revenue under the Government of Ireland Bill?

**MR. W. E. GLADSTONE :** I hope the hon. Member will not think me discourteous if I say that the remark I have just now made applies to his question, because all the provisions in the Bill in respect to the Post Office Service are quite clear. The Post Office properly so-called, the Postal Telegraph, and the Post Office Savings Bank will be transferred to the Irish Government, but the rates will be fixed by the Imperial Parliament.

#### THE SCOTCH SUSPENSORY BILL.

**MR. HOZIER (Lanarkshire, S.) :** I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury when the Government propose to introduce the Suspensory Bill for the Church of Scotland?

**MR. W. E. GLADSTONE :** No, Sir; we are not prepared to name a day.

#### SEA CHARTS.

**MR. HORACE PLUNKETT (Dublin Co., S.) :** I beg to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty whether, in view of the fact that other Government Departments have made a practice of presenting their publications to the National Library Dublin, the Hydrographic Department of the Admiralty will present a complete set of charts of the coast of the British Isles to that Library?

**SIR U. KAY-SHUTTLEWORTH :** It is considered by the Admiralty that they would not be justified in incurring the large addition to charges on naval funds which would be caused by undertaking the supply of charts to Public Libraries. Charts are presented under the Copyright Act to the libraries of the British Museum, and of the Universities of Oxford, Cambridge, Edinburgh, and Dublin. It is the practice to inform other Public Libraries that the charts can be purchased from the Admiralty agent.

#### MERCHANDISE MARKS.

**MR. STUART WORTLEY (Sheffield, Hallam) :** I beg to ask my hon. and learned Friend the Member for the Attercliffe Division of Sheffield a question of which I have given him private notice. It is : Whether his attention has been called to the fact that at the time when he assured this House yesterday that his Bill to amend the Merchandise Marks Acts had been printed and circulated to Members, it had not been so circulated; whether the Bill was, upon that assurance, read a second time without debate at the time when Unopposed Business can alone be taken; and what steps he proposes to take to restore to the House that control over the progress of this Bill which the House parted with yesterday under the misapprehension above described? I may explain that since I gave my hon. and learned Friend this notice he has kindly favoured me with a sight of the proof of his Bill, and has, therefore, made me aware that the Bill, of which I knew nothing yesterday, was not such a Bill as I should desire to oppose on its merits on the Second Reading. I, therefore, only put my question in its full shape, because I had informed my friends near me that I was going to raise in this way the demand which I conceived that the House in general, rather than myself in particular, was justified in addressing to my hon. and learned Friend, and not because I wish to initiate any opposition to the Bill at this stage. Perhaps my hon. and learned Friend will permit me to ask him, also, whether he will put the next stage of the Bill at such a reasonably long date after the circulation of the Bill, which has not yet taken place, as will practically place the House in a position not more prejudiced than at present?

**MR. BERNARD COLERIDGE (Sheffield, Attercliffe) :** My hon. Friend is quite correct. I made a mistake. I thought the Bill had been circulated, and I believed the Bill had been circulated. I do not think I need trouble the House with the ground of my belief. Enough to say, I made a mistake. The Bill has the sanction and approval of my hon. and learned Friend, who was the only person in the House to offer the slightest opposition to its passing. I am entirely in



the hands of the House. If any Members desire to object to the Bill, of course it is in their hands; but, inasmuch as this is a matter of local interest, more or less, and as I, representing one Party in Sheffield, and my hon. Friend representing the other Party in Sheffield, are agreed upon its merits, I would ask whether, in these circumstances, the House may not permit the Bill to stand as it is, and discuss the matter in Committee?

#### THE UNIFICATION OF LONDON.

MR. H. S. FOSTER (Suffolk, Lowestoft): I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board the following question, of which I have given him private notice: What will be the scope of the inquiry of the proposed small Commission in connection with the proposed Unification of London? Will it be competent for the Commissioners to take evidence in support of the creation of a number of Municipalities for the Metropolis as in the case of Croydon and West Ham, for which Charters of Incorporation have recently been granted?

MR. H. H. FOWLER: I must thank the hon. Gentleman for notice of his question, and I can only say in reply that the terms of the Reference have not yet been finally settled; but when they have been, they will be laid before the House.

MR. H. S. FOSTER: Will the House have an opportunity of expressing any opinion upon the terms of the Reference?

\*MR. H. H. FOWLER: It is not usual for such a thing to be done.

#### THE LOCAL VETO BILL.

MR. BARTLEY (Islington, N.): I beg to ask the Prime Minister whether the Local Veto Bill will be introduced on Monday by an explanatory statement, so that the House may have an opportunity of discussing it?

MR. W. E. GLADSTONE: Yes, Sir.

#### NOTICE OF MOTION.

##### THE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE.

MR. CHAPLIN (Lincolnshire, Sleaford): I beg to give notice that on the Motion for the appointment of the Select Committee to inquire into the agricultural depression I shall move the following Amendment:—

*Mr. Bernard Coleridge*

To leave out all words after "That" in order to insert "This House, while anxious to consider specific proposals for the relief of agricultural depression, declines to embark upon a general and exhaustive inquiry into the nature and causes of distress, which are manifest already, and thereby to postpone any practical measures of relief for an indefinite period of time."

I venture to ask the right hon. Gentleman whether the Motion to be proposed by the Government will be made at a convenient time, and whether reasonable notice of the day when the Motion will be made will be given?

MR. W. E. GLADSTONE: If there is to be an alternative discussion upon this Motion, which I should very much regret, it will be necessary for the Government to take care that those who wish to raise the discussion are not shut out from doing it by considerations of time.

#### NEW MEMBER SWORN.

Jeremiah Jordan, esquire, for Meath County (Southern Division).

#### MOTIONS.

##### ESTABLISHED CHURCH (WALES) BILL.

##### MOTION FOR LEAVE.

MR. ASQUITH: In asking, Sir, for leave to introduce a Bill to prevent the creation of new interests in the Welsh Church, I am undoubtedly asking the House to take the first step towards the Disestablishment and Disendowment of that Church. That the Government should adopt that course, whether it meets with approval or disapproval, will, I am certain, excite no surprise from any quarter of the House, for the policy of Welsh Disestablishment is a policy to which the Liberal Party as a whole, is distinctly pledged. It is a policy which was before the eyes and in the minds of the electors of the country when they recorded their votes last summer, and Her Majesty's Government would be failing in their duty if they did not take advantage of the first opportunity which offers itself to them, and by all the means which the requirements of Business place at their disposal, give prompt and effectual execution to the policy so entrusted to them. Before

I go into the general question, the House will, perhaps, permit me to say two or three preliminary words with reference to our method of procedure and the form of our proposal. Sir, the primary obligation which rests upon the Government in reference to the great measure in relation to Ireland, which was introduced and discussed last week, renders it obviously impossible that we could, with any advantage, introduce during this Session a detailed and complicated measure of Disestablishment. On the other hand, the Government feel that the requirements of the case would not be met by simply inviting the formal assent of the House to an Abstract Resolution. In the year 1868 my right hon. Friend the present Prime Minister, when he took in hand for the first time the question of the Disestablishment of the Irish Church, proceeded, in the first instance, by way of Resolution; and it was only when the House had carried his Resolution that he introduced, as founded upon it, a Bill, which is the counterpart, in substance and intention, though not in terms, of the Bill which I am going to ask the leave of the House to introduce. All the conditions of that time, however, were very different from the conditions in which we find ourselves to-day. My right hon. Friend at that time was the Leader of the Opposition, and not a responsible Minister of the Crown. He was taking action in an expiring Parliament. Only the year before that in which his Resolutions were introduced Parliament had assented to a wide extension of the suffrage; and my right hon. Friend felt it was his duty, before this question was finally dealt with, that the new constituencies so brought into existence should have an opportunity of expressing their opinion upon it. But, Sir, in the circumstances of to-day, in the judgment of the Government at any rate, it would be a pure waste of time to introduce a Resolution first and a Bill afterwards. No doubt there are many hon. Members in this House who object to the Disestablishment of the Welsh Church, and they will have an opportunity of expressing their opinions, and of giving effect to them, in the Division Lobby on the Second Reading of the Bill. I adopt in reference to this Bill the language used in another place by the Duke of Argyll with reference to a

corresponding Bill in 1868, when he said that

"The first great object of the Bill is to give an assurance to the Irish people."

I will substitute the Welsh people—

"That the Imperial Parliament will deal without unnecessary delay with the whole question of the Established Church in Ireland, and place the question in the forefront of the living politics of the nation."

That is the spirit and those are the objects with which this Bill has been introduced. I will now state very briefly what is the form in which we propose to give effect to our intentions. The original intention of the Government was to follow closely the Bill of 1868, which received the assent of the House of Commons at all its stages, but which was rejected, as so many other Bills are, when it reached another place. The Bill of 1868 prohibited all new appointments to bishoprics, dignities, and benefices which were in the gift of public patrons. It did not deal with private patronage, for the very simple and sufficient reason that you could not interfere with the exercise of the right of private patronage even to the extent of suspending it for a limited time without, at any rate, giving rise to claims of pecuniary compensation. But when we came to look into the matter it appeared to the Government that all the objects they had in view might be met by a simpler and less drastic course of procedure. We do not propose to prohibit the Crown or any public patron from appointing to such offices in the Church in Wales as may become vacant after the passing of the Act. But our measure consists of a single clause, to this effect: that, in all appointments so made—private patronage is not dealt with—after this Bill becomes an Act, the emoluments of the office should be held by the new incumbent subject to the pleasure of Parliament. Thus there can be no claim to pecuniary compensation in respect of a person taking office after the passing of the Act, because office will have been taken with full notice of the declared intention of Parliament. In the view of the Government, it becomes unnecessary to insert the original provision restraining the proceedings of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners; and I will ask you, Mr. Speaker, in putting the question, to omit those concluding words.

I am not going to discuss the abstract question of Establishments, nor the further question as to the immemorial and constitutional right of Parliament to appropriate for national purposes national property which has been enjoyed by members of a particular religious community. [*Opposition laughter.*] No, Sir, because I regard the ethics and the constitutionality of that question as having been finally and conclusively settled in the case of the Church in Ireland, when this House, with the assent of the House of Lords and the Crown, passed a measure to which every objection could be taken that can be taken to the present Bill. One still sometimes hears from the lips of belated controversialists the words "plunder and sacrilege." But with the Act for the Disestablishment of the Irish Church unrepealed, I think we are entitled to ask that these expressions shall be banished to some museum of political antiquities. Nor will I go into the historical question, tempting as the subject is, as to the origin and position of the Welsh Church. I do not think it can be said to be altogether irrelevant to such a discussion as this to consider whence the Established Church came, what were the circumstances under which it was planted among the people, and how far in days gone by it has discharged, or failed to discharge, the responsible duties which its position involved. But if that question is to be dealt with it must be by other speakers. For my part, I am content to take existing facts as they are, and to rest the case for the Disestablishment and Disendowment of the Welsh Church not upon historical grievances, but simply on the state of things which confronts us when we survey the ecclesiastical position of the Principality at the present day. What is that position? The Church in Wales is, admittedly, in a minority—a very small minority. [*Opposition cries of "No!"*] I do not know whether hon. Gentlemen who question my assertion are prepared to maintain that the Church in Wales embraces within its fold more than a quarter of the population.

LORD R. CHURCHILL (Paddington, S.): I am.

MR. ASQUITH: The noble Lord says he is. Then I shall be glad to know upon what facts. I shall be curious to know whether, so far as the Welsh-

speaking part of the population is concerned, anyone is prepared to maintain that less than six-sevenths of it are outside the Established Church? I should have thought that it was sufficient to give the fact, which is admitted by the supporters of the Church as well as by those who favour Disestablishment, that, as was stated by the Committee which reported on Intermediate Higher Education in Wales in 1881, the Non-conformists constitute a very large majority of the population. I am glad, however, to say that we need not rely upon the fallible and disputed evidence of more or less conjectural statistics. The people of Wales have at their disposal a constitutional organ for the expression of their wishes; and if I want to know what the opinion of Wales is with reference to a matter which peculiarly and intimately concerns the Welsh Church, I do not think I can have more authentic evidence of it than is to be found in the character of her representation. Taking the last General Election, and including Monmouthshire in Wales, there were 34 Members elected, of whom 31 are pledged to Disestablishment, and only three are opposed to it.

AN HON. MEMBER: Home Rule.

MR. ASQUITH: An hon. Gentleman opposite says "Home Rule." Are we, then, to understand that the decision of the Welsh people at the last General Election was upon a question of Home Rule, and not upon a question of Welsh Disestablishment? To that question I get no reply.

LORD R. CHURCHILL: Either.

MR. ASQUITH: Well, as the noble Lord has raised the question let us dispose of it once for all. I will quote an authority which I think even the noble Lord will accept, that of the author of an article on "Constitution Revision," which I read with great pleasure, and profit—intellectual pleasure, at any rate—in the November number of the *National Review*. It proceeded from a very distinguished pen—that of the Leader of the Conservative Party—and it preferred to account, amongst other things, for that fortuitous and incoherent majority which keep my right hon. Friend and his Colleagues in power. In the course of his review Lord Salisbury had to deal with the somewhat remarkable case of Wales. This is Lord Salisbury's

explanation of the matter—not the same by any means as that of the noble Lord. Lord Salisbury says—

“It is notorious that the Welsh voted for Radical candidates, not for their love of Home Rule, but for their aversion towards the Welsh Church.”

Well, Sir, I am quite content, whether the noble Lord is or not, with that authority. I say it makes good my statement. I am glad to believe that all these 31 gentlemen are good Home Rulers also; but I say they are returned by their constituents, amongst other things, at any rate, to put an end to the Establishment of the Welsh Church. The average majority of the 31 Members who are in favour of Disestablishment is 2,000, while of the three opponents of Disestablishment from Wales one had a majority of 98 and another a majority of 118. But that does not exhaust the case. In the three typical Welsh Counties of Anglesey, Cardigan, and Carmarthen, every candidate who appeared before the electors, whether he was a supporter or an opponent of Home Rule, was in favour of Disestablishment. It was suggested by my hon. and learned Friend the late Solicitor General, whom I do not see in his place, in a very remarkable speech which he made last year in defence of the Church, that in seven of the eastern counties of Wales the Nonconformists were in a comparatively small minority. But in these seven eastern counties the verdict is the same as in the rest of the counties. They include East Glamorganshire, in which the majority was nearly 3,000; West Monmouthshire, majority about 5,000; and the borough of Merthyr, which beats the record of all constituencies in the country, with a majority of 9,000. The real significance of these figures is that they represent the climax of a continuing process which has been apparent since 1868, when for the first time, by the extension of the suffrage, the people of Wales had a fair opportunity of pronouncing their opinions. Their real significance can only be measured when at the same time we realise the strength of the national forces arrayed upon the other side. What is the position of the Church in Wales? For generations past she has monopolised the whole Parliamentary representation of the country, and in days gone by—I

do not mean as a body, but through the land-owning class she owned, and owns to-day, almost the whole of the land of Wales. Until very lately—until within the memory of almost the youngest here—the Church has filled the magistracy and all the offices of public trust. It dominated for generations the government and teaching of the grammar schools. It controlled the endowments and the charities of the country. The Church had at her disposal, and behind her throughout this controversy—of which we are now approaching the close—every material force and every institution of the land. I will add—for I think it is an admission which justice demands—that whatever may have been the case in the past, during the last generation at any rate, the Church has had what has been for purposes of offence and defence a far more valuable weapon in the increased zeal and devotion of her ministers and her laymen. She has fought in this struggle, I do not hesitate to say now, under the most advantageous conditions; and if she is worsted—and she had been worsted, as I have proved by the evidence which I have given as to the state of opinion in Wales—she has shown that it has been through no lack of discipline or energy on her own part. I cannot forbear, before leaving that branch of the subject, from quoting what has often been quoted before—the opinion of one of the keenest and most fastidious critics ever known in this country, a man who was not only not an enemy of the Church, and who was certainly not a friend of Dissent—I mean the late and ever-lamented Mr. Matthew Arnold. In one of the last things he wrote before his death he penned these words with reference to the ecclesiastical condition of Wales—

“To maintain the Establishment in Wales for the sole benefit of a small minority of the population is an absurdity there just as it was in Ireland. When it comes before the mind of reasonable people, it is felt by them to be so. The thing being felt to be an absurdity, its long continuance becomes impossible.”

I venture to ask this question: Suppose, for the sake of argument, that the Welsh Church were a separate Establishment; suppose it were separated, even in the same sense in which the Irish Church was separated from the Church of England, is there any man, any con-

siderable body of men, in this House who would say that Englishmen, Scotchmen, and Irishmen here are entitled to force its continuance upon the Welsh people in defiance of their express wish? I do not believe, if that was the position of things, that even those who are going to vote against this Bill, and against any subsequent measures that may be taken, would venture to defend such a position. Are we, then, not justified in taking, in relation to the Welsh Church, the opinions of the Welsh people as a governing—I will not say an absolutely conclusive, but at any rate a governing—factor? I have heard it said that to occupy such a position as that is to be guilty of what is called separation. If it be so then I am a Separatist, and in very good company, the company of no less distinguished a personage than the Leader of the Liberal Unionist Party, the Duke of Devonshire, because as is in the recollection of every Member of this House, not very many years ago, when a precisely similar question arose with reference to Scotland, the Duke of Devonshire declared, in plain and emphatic and unmistakable terms, that the opinion of the people of Scotland ought ultimately to decide the question. I apply the same test to the case of Wales. I say that, unless you can show some overwhelming ground which has never yet been suggested or hinted in the other direction, the facts I have stated as to the condition of Welsh opinion are conclusive as to the state of that Welsh opinion, and as to the course this House and Parliament ought to take. What is the ground taken when you attempt to differentiate the case of Wales from that of Ireland and Scotland? It is that the Welsh Church has no independent or separate existence, and that the dioceses with which we propose to deal in this Bill, or in any subsequent measure for Disestablishment, are parts of the Province of Canterbury and integral portions of the Church of England; that there is such a complete organic connection, I ought, perhaps, to say incorporation, as between the Church of England and those outlying constituent parts, that you cannot touch the one without at the same time touching the other. [“Hear, hear!”] The hon. Member for the University of Oxford agrees that I have stated the argument fairly. To those who make use of it, I should like to put the question,

*Mr. Asquith*

How far are they going to carry it? Suppose that in Wales the Church, instead of including within its pale one-fourth—if the noble Lord likes, I will say one-third of the population of Wales, it does not affect the argument—only included one-fortieth of the Welsh people, would you, for the sake of this miserable handful of persons, and notwithstanding that the vast majority of the people of Wales were against the continued maintenance of this Establishment in their midst, yet consider yourselves entitled to require Parliament to keep it up? Because if the argument is good for one-fourth, it must be for one-fortieth, and it must be good with reference to any smaller, any infinitesimal, proportion of the people, in any hypothetical case you could imagine. But I ask, further, is this a wise position for hon. Gentlemen to take up in the interests of the Church of England itself? Are you going really to ask Parliament to flout national sentiment in Wales, clearly and unequivocally expressed, because, if we granted that which the Welsh people so plainly demand, ulterior consequences might happen to an institution here in England with which the Welsh people are not concerned? Is that your position? I ask, further: Supposing Disestablishment and Disendowment took place; supposing these four Welsh dioceses no longer to enjoy such privileges and such endowments as now belong to them, in virtue of their incorporation in the Established Church, will the connection between these dioceses—I do not say the Mother Church, but the Church of which they are a part and parcel—cease to exist? We sometimes hear arguments which seem to imply, “If you remove from these particular dioceses these special privileges which the status of our Establishment gives to them, Wales will be plunged into a condition of spiritual destitution, and the Church will be mutilated and maimed.” But it is our duty to safeguard the Church against the faint-heartedness of her own advocates. These dioceses will remain with their Bishops, with their clergy, and with their whole ecclesiastical organisation, and with full, ample, and generous provision, if we are to judge from past experience, for every interest which at present exists. The only change will be that the Bishops and the Deans of the dioceses will no longer be appointed by the Prime Minister

of the day, and the national property that has hitherto in Wales been appropriated to a denomination representing a small minority of the people will be devoted to Welsh national purposes. I ask hon. Gentlemen who take this gloomy view of the powers and prospects of their own Church to look at the history of Nonconformity in Wales. Nonconformists in Wales have covered the country with, I believe, something like 4,000 chapels, and, though the poorest section of the community, they contribute something like £400,000 a year in the shape of voluntary contributions to maintain the religious life of their various denominations. The total endowment, so far as I can ascertain the figures, of the Church of England in Wales, in the four dioceses, does not exceed £250,000 a year. Are we going to be told that this great Body, representing the wealthy and the landed classes of Wales, and said to have an increasing hold upon the opinion and upon the sympathy of Wales, and, at any rate, having behind her the co-operation and active support of the great Church of England—are we to be told that it is not going to be even capable of doing that which the Nonconformists have done, and are ready to do in the future? I entirely disclaim, in laying this Bill before Parliament, on the part of the Government any feeling of hostility whatever to the Church of England. We claim to be better friends of the Church than those who are pinning their cause to the Establishment, and I have endeavoured to avoid, in the remarks I have made, wounding the feelings of the most sensitive Churchman. I have discussed the question solely—as I hope it will continue to be discussed—on broad grounds of national policy. But when I am told that the Church in Wales will cease to exist, or that the Church of England will never recover from this staggering blow, I venture to remind hon. Gentlemen that in the United States of America, in Australia, in Ireland, the English Church is to be found as strong and vigorous, resting on a still broader basis of popular sympathy and support than where it is protected and safeguarded by the principle of Establishment. At any rate, without going into these ulterior consequences, it appears to us that political justice casts upon us a duty which we

must perform. The first step in the performance of that duty is to prevent, as this Bill will prevent, the creation of new pecuniary interests. It is a moderate measure; it is a temperate measure; and, in my judgment, it will do no harm to the Church. It certainly is not conceived in any spirit of animosity against the Church, and I trust that hon. Gentlemen will at least give us, who have introduced the measure, credit for believing that the Church will not be weaker, but will be stronger; that it will not be less, but more, influential as a moral and regenerating force in the Principality of Wales, when she can step down from the invidious position of ascendancy which she at present occupies; when she can cast aside the encumbering traditions of her own political past; and when, descending into the common arena, she can meet her rivals upon level ground and upon equal terms, and contend with them for the spiritual advance of Wales.

Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That leave be given to bring in a Bill to prevent, for a limited time, the creation of new interests in Church of England bishoprics, dignities, and benefices in Wales and Monmouthshire."—(*Mr. Secretary Asquith.*)

SIR J. GORST (Cambridge University): I beg to move the following Amendment:—

"That it is inexpedient and unjust to interfere by legislation with the operations of the Church in the Welsh dioceses, while the principle of an alteration in the relations between Church and State in that part of the United Kingdom has not been adopted by Parliament."

I am aware that to move an Amendment to the Motion for Leave to introduce a Bill is not a usual or generally a convenient course. But in taking that unusual course I think hon. Gentlemen, if they will listen to my arguments, will see that I am reasonable and logical, because my objection is not to the particular Bill which the right hon. Gentleman has sketched out, but to the principle of proceeding by Suspensory Bill at all. Therefore, it is just and reasonable to take the sense of the House at the outset of this legislation as to whether the course proposed by Her Majesty's Government is one which the House ought to adopt. The arguments which I shall address to the House will be arguments against a Suspensory Bill at all. The arguments of the Home

Secretary were chiefly directed to supporting a Bill for the Disestablishment of the Church which is to be brought in at some future time ; but my objection to a Suspensory Bill is one which will proceed upon very broad and very deep considerations. We are living at the present time in a period of transition, when social forces, by which men are surrounded, are so great that individual energy and individual zeal are unfit and unable to cope with them, and when the social progress which is likely to be made in the immediate future will be made by means of association, combination, and corporate action. At such a period hon. Members will agree with me, it is foolish to destroy, or even to injure, any institution which either is useful to the people or is capable of being made useful to them. If that principle applies to ordinary combinations and associations, it applies in a very much greater degree to a Church, because at the present day the value of religious organisation in dealing with the social problems which are likely to occupy attention in the future is immense. You must if you can prevail on those elements in society, which are antagonistic to regulate their pretensions and demands within limits consistent with the maintenance of our social fabric by instilling in the minds of all classes a sense of their duty towards each other—that employers of labour, on the one hand, must insist on their absolute rights, but, at the same time, must remember that they have a duty to discharge towards their *employés*, and that the different classes of workmen in the country must not combine in the pursuit only of their own individual and selfish interests, but that they must have regard to the interests of others and not pursue their own selfish interests too far. If the House agrees that these propositions are sound, then, in dealing with the Bill of the right hon. Gentleman, we have only two questions to ask and to decide. The first question is: Is the Church in Wales capable of being useful to the people? If that question is answered in the affirmative, will the Suspensory Bill—not a Bill for Disestablishment—cripple its usefulness? Now, I do not want to weary the House with statistics as to the usefulness of the Church in Wales ; but perhaps the House will permit me

to draw its attention to a few facts that will enable them to estimate and realise the character and the extent of the progress and vitality of the Church in the Principality. The most important point in estimating the Church's growth and vitality is the increase in the number of its ministers by whom its usefulness is made effective. I find that in the four dioceses of Wales the incumbents actually engaged in the cure of souls increased between the years 1834 and 1886 from 457 to 930, while the number of assistant curates in the same period increased from 65 to 454—more than sevenfold. I have not got statistics which show the extent to which the ministrations of the clergy in Wales have been accepted by the people in the whole of the Principality, but I have been furnished by the Bishop of St. Asaph—[*Ironical Ministerial Cheers*—]with figures relating to his diocese, which, in spite of the jeers of hon. Gentlemen opposite, I think will be interesting to the House. In 1870, the year in which the National Education Bill was passed, there were in the National Schools of that diocese 11,600 children, and in 1889 that number increased to 19,400, or nearly double. In the Sunday Schools, during the same period, the number of scholars increased from 15,000 to 20,600. In the decade 1860 to 1870 the confirmations numbered 12,000 odd, while in the decade 1880 to 1890 they were 19,800. The communicants in the churches on Easter Day, 1871, were 7,375, and on Easter Day, 1890, they were 14,534, or nearly double those of 1871. The average Sunday services in the diocese in 1870 were 240 English and 219 Welsh, a total of 459 ; while in 1889 these rose to 394 English services and 264 Welsh services, making a total of 658. During the past 40 years in that diocese, which has 208 parishes, and a population of 269,000, there have been built and restored no fewer than 184 churches, 150 schools, and 138 parsonage houses at a total expenditure of £899,000. These figures will give the House an idea of the extent to which the Church in Wales has succeeded in making itself useful to the people. A still more vivid picture of the Church work that is going on in Wales is afforded by one parish, which I will refer to especially—the parish of Brymbo. This is a parish

of which an hon. Gentleman who represented a Welsh constituency once said it was a shame that money should be extracted from the poor people, because the population of that parish, numbering 8,345 persons, were almost all of them colliers and steel-workers. The population all belong to the labouring class. Well, in that parish 20 years ago there was one ruinous church; by the collections of these working people, aided, no doubt to some extent by others, there are now three churches in the parish, and the separate district church—in all four churches. In these churches the whole of the sittings are free and unappropriated. There are 600 sittings in the parish church, in St. Paul's 450, in St. John's 300, and a number not specified in this district church, the name of which I am incapable of pronouncing. Besides building these four churches they have fitted up a mission-room, built boys' and girls' schools, a vicarage and school at Brymbo. All the expenses of the parish are paid by subscriptions, and the subscribers seem to consist almost exclusively of colliers, blacksmiths, shopkeepers, a colliery manager, a station master, workmen in steel-works, a farmer, a joiner, and a shoemaker. These people raise among them a sum of no less than £200 a year for the support of the churches of that parish. [*Ministerial cheers.*] I am pleased to hear those cheers, for I interpret them to mean that such work as goes on in Brymbo parish is useful, is good for the people, and is such work as no legislation of this House ought to interfere with. I have, therefore, brought the House to agree to my first proposition, that the Church in Wales is an institution capable of being useful to the people. I will not dwell any longer upon a proposition to which everybody assents, but will at once proceed to my second proposition—namely, whether this Suspensory Bill, which will suspend the action of the Church, will injure the good work which the House seems to admit is going on. The Bill will stop the existing mode of operations of the Church; it will suspend the functions which it at present performs. It will stop the corporate life of the Church and its present mode of government, and will not give any fresh powers of activity in other ways. My view of the matter is that

suspension is far worse for a Religious Body than Disestablishment. I do not think that Disestablishment is a wholly unmixed evil. [*Ministerial cheers.*] Hon. Members misunderstand my meaning. When we have to discuss Disestablishment I shall be able to adduce reasons to show that the evils preponderate over the advantages. What I said was that Disestablishment is not an unmixed evil, because while taking away some advantages, it gives the Church an opportunity of developing its energy as a voluntary association—and very likely by the process of Disestablishment and Disendowment a certain stimulus and activity would be given to the members of the Church which might assist them to overcome, in some measure, the evils which had been created. But by a Suspensory Bill you give the whole of the mischief without any of the benefits. You stop the existing life of the Church without giving it fresh life in another direction. ["No, no!"] That proposition does not seem to be accepted. Let me calmly argue it out. How can the Church make progress unless it attracts young men who are growing up to its ranks, and while the Church in Wales is under a Suspensory Bill, what prospect is afforded to young men anxious to take orders? There can be no security for vested interest. Then besides the necessity of attracting recruits to the service of the Church you must have the means of promoting the higher officers of the Church to superior places falling vacant, and the inferior officers to positions of greater responsibility and influence. How could you do that during the operation of the Suspensory Act? If we take the Irish Church Act as a model of this unknown Bill, which the Home Secretary has indicated it is his intention to introduce in the course of a year or two, by the 15th section, compensation was given to what were called permanent curates, or, in other words, curates recognized by the Church Commissioners as permanent. I do not know whether anything of that sort was intended by this Bill. But look at the position of a curate during this Suspensory Bill. If he remains in his permanent place he will after a Disestablishment Bill passes have a right to compensation, but if he accepts promotion during the operation of a Suspensory Bill he will forfeit any right to compensation



for such promotion. You may here and there find men whose financial position renders them above such considerations, or with nobleness of soul sufficient to look on salaries and emoluments and compensation as dust and ashes; but you must deal with the average of mankind. In any Church combination there are men with vested interests which, possibly, they cannot afford to give up, and, therefore, under a Suspensory Bill, any curate who changes his position must be prepared to sacrifice his future prosperity. What are we to say as to the benefices themselves? As the benefices of the Church fall vacant, if the corporate life of the Church is adequately to continue you must promote the younger men into the higher and more important positions of the clergy. But if a beneficed clergyman gave up his position for the sake of obtaining a higher place in the Church he would forfeit the advantages which the attainment of the higher place would otherwise bring with it. That would be the case in a still stronger degree where the highest officers of the Church are concerned. Supposing a Bishopric falls vacant during the time the Suspensory Bill is in force. How are you going to obtain a fresh Bishop? You will only obtain a mere stop-gap Bishop with no vested right. He will not be a Bishop of a free or voluntary Church, in which case he would know what is before him. He will be a Bishop condemned practically to future extinction. He will have no recognised position, no certainty, no security. Now, I do not quite understand what the Bill, as described by the Home Secretary, is to do in the case of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners. Will the Ecclesiastical Commissioners be required to go on increasing the salaries of the holders of Welsh benefices? For the last 60 years there has been a steady progress going on in the dioceses of Wales, by which the transference of ecclesiastical property, formerly held by Bishops, canons, and rectors, has been made to the incumbents of the parish where the property lies or to new parishes. No less than £35,000 a year is spent at present in augmenting the income of the Welsh parishes. Is that augmentation to go on, or is it to cease until the Disestablishment Bill is introduced? Then another important point to consider is the course that will be taken in regard to the Ec-

clesiastical Commissioners' Common Fund. Are they to be required to spend that Common Fund, or any part of it, in Wales? At present the Common Fund is distributed in Wales in private benefactions, according to the claims of the population, and special consideration is given to the mining districts. Are the Ecclesiastical Commissioners to be forced by any provision in the Bill to go on spending the common fund in Wales, notwithstanding the threat of Disestablishment hanging over the Church? If not, it must be apparent to the House that, unless some fair arrangement is made, the Church will be very seriously wronged to the amount of £35,000 a year, during the operation of the Suspensory Bill—the amount which has been, and would be, contributed by the Ecclesiastical Commissioners for Church services in Wales, but which, with the threat of Disestablishment hanging over their heads, the Commissioners may be prevented, or may be unable, or may think it inconsistent with their duties to spend. Again, how long is this Suspensory Bill—this condition of suspended animation—to last? I did not hear anything definite on that subject from the right hon. Gentleman. I did not hear any definite promise made by him—and if it had been made it would have been worth attending to—as to the precise number of years for which this state of suspended animation in Wales is to last. The Prime Minister, in a speech made on this subject two years ago, pointed out to the House that the disestablishment of the Church in Wales would be a difficult and complicated matter. Perhaps I may read the words of the right hon. Gentleman, as they will give the House some idea of the improbability of an early solution of the question.

“The operation of disestablishing the Church of Wales from the Church of England will not be an easy one. I suspect it will be found that it is tied and knotted and tangled, I might almost say, in such a multitude of legal bonds or meshes with the general body of the Church of England that it would be a very formidable matter indeed to accomplish this untidy purpose. I have not the least doubt that it will require all the skill, all the knowledge, all the care, all the sense of equity and moderation that it will be possible to bring to bear upon it, in order to carry through that work in a satisfactory manner.”

I quote that to show that in all human probability, if this Bill were passed into law during the present Session, the

Church in Wales would be kept in this condition of suspended animation for an indefinite number of years, which, as I have shown, would be most detrimental to the progress and the good work of the Church. I must say, again, that Disestablishment at once would be better, would be far less injurious to the interests and progress of the Church in Wales than this new-fangled method, for which there is no precedent in our laws, of suspending her functions before you are prepared to deal finally with our status as an Establishment. What is the only reason given to us for this inconvenient and cruel course of treatment? The only reason which the Home Secretary gave—the only reason that ever has been given—is national sentiment. I am not going to scoff at national sentiment. I have the most intense admiration for national sentiment. I think it is for all our good that in this United Kingdom we have so many different nationalities, each of which contribute by its peculiar qualities and its peculiar virtues to the benefit of the general whole. But if I would not scoff at nationalities in general still less would I scoff at the Welsh nationality. There is a fervour and a poetry in the temperament of the Welsh which add greatly to the character of the United Kingdom; and I am sure that if any one had the experience I once had of being present at a mass meeting in Wales and hearing 15,000 voices singing their national songs, led by the hon. Member for the Rhondda Division (Mr. Abraham), he would have had his dull Saxon blood stimulated by so fine a sound. But this very admiration for Welsh nationality make an Englishman unwilling that this United Church—for the Church of England is a United Church—should be severed from its Welsh dioceses, and lose the zeal and the poetic sentiment—and the love of music—which the Welsh element confer upon it. I would not fix any limit upon the development of national sentiment in the United Kingdom except one—and that is that national sentiment must never be carried so far as to injure its partners in the United Kingdom and break up the Union by which we are so happily held together. I am unwilling to believe that the nationality of Wales really desires to inflict upon the Church, either directly in the Welsh dioceses or indirectly by

severing them from the others in England, an injury which the Bill would cause, and my reluctance to believe that is based on the sentiments which the founders of Welsh Nonconformity themselves entertained towards the Church. I may quote again those words of Daniel Rowlands, uttered to his son on his death-bed in 1790, when he urged him to stand by the Church, and told him there was a spark in the Prayer Book that will never be put out. "Though it is hidden now," he said, "you may live to see it bursting out into a bright flame." He urged his son to stand by the Church—"though, perhaps," he said, "you will not be repaid for it, still stand by the Church." I find the same sentiment, in the main, in the Constitution of the Welsh Nonconformist Bodies. I hold in my hand the Constitution of the Welsh Calvinistic Body, an unalterable Constitution—by which that Body is as much bound as the Church is by its laws. I find it laid down that—

"The object of the said Conference hath been, and shall be, to promulgate the Gospel of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, as set forth in the doctrine and articles of the Church of England, and in the book called the Shorter Catechism."

I therefore believe that this sentiment which has arisen in Wales is a perverted and a transient one. I believe it, because I cannot help contrasting it with the conduct of the Nonconformists of England towards the Church. A great many of the English Nonconformists are strongly opposed to Disestablishment. I am quite aware that there are some English Nonconformists who are in favour of Disestablishment; but I am quite sure there is no English Nonconformist who would do anything which, in his opinion, would injure the usefulness or impair the efficiency of the Church. If the English Nonconformists were in favour of Disestablishment, it was on the same ground that some members of the Church itself are in favour of it, because they believe that Disestablishment would conduce to the greater efficiency and greater activity of the Church. But what English Nonconformist would desire to see the action of the Church suspended for an indefinite number of years till the question of Disestablishment was decided upon? What English Nonconformist would ever consent to inflict upon the Church in Eng-

land such disabilities and such disadvantages as the Church in Wales would labour under if this Bill were to pass into law? There is an hostility to the Church exhibited by this Welsh national opinion to which the Government are yielding, and which was shown in the Debates last year on the Clergy Discipline Bill, when the conduct of certain Welsh Members were severely rebuked by the Prime Minister, but which, notwithstanding his rebuke, was persisted in. I believe, notwithstanding the action of certain Welsh Members of this House, that the great mass of Welsh Nonconformists are animated by the same spirit as their English brethren, and that they have no real desire to destroy or injure the Church. At all the corporate gatherings of the Church in England it is a common and ordinary part of the proceedings that an address is presented by the Nonconformist ministers of the neighbourhood welcoming the corporate action of the Church in their district, and wishing her God-speed in the effort she is making for the improvement of the people. I do not know whether it is the same in Wales.

An hon. MEMBER : It is.

SIR JOHN GORST : I rejoice to hear it, and I do not believe that men who will come in that way and deliver addresses to a Church meeting when it is held in their neighbourhood are really desirous to pursue a course which I think I have shown the House would be most injurious to the Church. I am obliged to the House for the kindness and attention which they have extended to me. I have tried to make out three propositions. First, that the Church in Wales is vigorous and fruitful, and not a dead and decaying branch of the Church, but one of its most vigorous and lively parts ; in the second place, I have tried to show that a Bill like this, which is to suspend all appointments of Church officers for an indefinite time, and to entirely destroy the particular mode in which, by law, it now develops and expands, will injure and cripple the work which the Church is now doing ; and, thirdly, I have tried to show that the national feeling in Wales, as it was exhibited in the House of Commons in the last Session of the last Parliament, is diverted. I believe it is transient; I believe it is contrary to

the genius of Nonconformity; and that it is utterly at variance with the forbearance and toleration which the Founder of our religion taught.

\*SIR JOHN R. MOWBRAY (Oxford University), in seconding the Motion, said he was very much surprised at the mode in which the Government proposed to deal with the Welsh Church. His right hon. Friend the Home Secretary had been candid enough to explain why he had dealt with the question in this unprecedented manner by bringing in a Bill not preceded by a Resolution. His arguments, however, were not satisfactory. In 1868 the Liberal Party was on the Opposition side of the House. The Leader of the House in 1893 was the Leader of the Opposition in 1868, and the right hon. Gentleman did not then care how much time he spent, or how much he interfered with the Business of the Government by moving Resolutions. But in 1893 there was the Home Rule Bill to be got through, and other work also must be done ; and, therefore, the House must not discuss the Main Question of the Disestablishment of the Church in Wales. But he thought there was something to complain of in the speech of the Home Secretary. If the right hon. Gentleman had been candid on one side, he had not been equally candid on the other side. For the past fortnight a notice had stood on the Paper in the name of the right hon. Gentleman, which stated that the Bill was not only to prevent the creation of new interests in bishoprics, dignities, and benefices, but also to restrain in certain respects the proceedings of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners. They all knew that the right hon. Gentleman was a deliberate and far-seeing man. He knew that some legislation would be required to restrain the action of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, and it was to be presumed that these words were put into the notice with the sanction of the Cabinet. But now, without a single word of explanation, the right hon. Gentleman had said that he would leave out all the words in the notice referring to the Ecclesiastical Commissioners. Why had not that been done during the past fortnight? His right hon. Friend had stated that this Bill would be the first step towards the Disestablishment of the Church in Wales. He would like to ask in what

*Sir J. Gorst*

way it would be a step to the creation of new interests?

MR. ASQUITH: I will answer my right hon. Friend now. The Bill will not stop any appointment or preferment of any kind, but anyone who accepts any position of emolument after the passing of the Bill will hold it subject to the pleasure of Parliament.

SIR JOHN R. MOWBRAY said, he would like to know why it had become unnecessary to restrain the proceedings of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners? Was nothing needed to stop the action of the Commissioners, or did the right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury intend to follow up the course which had been initiated by the Comptroller of the Household (Mr. Leveson-Gower), to stop the proceedings of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners by voting as an Ecclesiastical Commissioner and bringing all the authority of the Government to bear against the formation of any new districts? It had been elicited by questions in Parliament that the Comptroller of the Household had endeavoured to stop the proceedings for the formation of a new district at Colwyn Bay. What happened was explained by an extract which he would read from the statement made by the Archbishop of Canterbury in the House of Lords. At a meeting of the Estates Committee of the Ecclesiastical Commission, held on February 9th, there was read—

"A communication from Mr. H. M. Suft, on behalf of the Lord President of the Council, forwarding copies of a letter from Mr. J. Herbert Roberts, M.P., and of a Petition to Her Majesty from the Rev. W. Venables Williams, the vicar of the parish of Llandrillo-yn-Rhos, in the diocese of St. Asaph, protesting against the assignment of a separate district out of that parish to the consecrated church of St. Paul, Colwyn Bay. Mr. Roberts urges that, independently of the considerations set forth by Mr. Williams, it would not be justifiable, in view of the Suspensory Bill relating to Wales about to be brought into Parliament, for the Commissioners to create a new cure, and, therefore, a new ecclesiastical vested interest. Mr. Leveson-Gower stated that he was authorised, on behalf of Her Majesty's Government, to deprecate, in view of contemplated legislation, the assignment of any new districts within the Welsh dioceses."

The Home Secretary has said that the Bill would prevent the creation of unnecessary benefices; but the question was not whether the Bill would prevent the

creation of unnecessary benefices, but whether it would impede the creation of necessary benefices. Would the Government claim the right to stop any action on the part of the Commissioners which the law made imperative upon them to carry out? He supposed it was to be taken for granted that the conduct of the Comptroller of the Household in the Colwyn Bay case had been sanctioned by the Cabinet. The Comptroller had acted after consulting the Home Secretary, and the Lord President of the Council had forwarded a significant letter to the same effect. In any case he held the Government responsible for the action of the Comptroller of the Household; and looking back for 20 years, he saw in these proceedings the same spirit which ultimately effected the abolition of purchase in the Army by Royal Warrant. He had ceased to be a Member of the Ecclesiastical Commission, but no one had greater experience of the Commission than he. He had acted for two and a half years as Crown Commissioner, and for nearly 22 years as Commissioner appointed by the Archbishop of Canterbury. He had acted on the Commission with men of all shades of political opinion—with Lords Chichester, Eversley, Cardwell, Aberdare, Sherbrooke, and Mr. Edward Bouvene, all of them Liberals. He had acted with these Church Estates Commissioners appointed by the present Prime Minister in his previous Governments, 1869, 1880, 1885. But they had never allowed politics to enter into their deliberations; they administered the Acts under which they were empowered according to the best of their ability, and they thought only of their single duty to the Church of the nation. That duty was to develop and to utilise to the greatest possible extent the property of the Commission, and to distribute out of the common fund the surplus available for the relief of spiritual destitution. In that distribution they never favoured any parish in any part of the Kingdom; they did justice to Cornwall as well as to Durham, to the Principality of Wales as well as to East Anglia, and they never ventured to anticipate the action of the Legislature, or presumed to say what politics might prevail in any Parliament. Now, a new matter was brought under the consideration of the Ecclesiastical Commission. The

Commissioners were called upon to take a new departure by anticipating the action of Parliament—action which Parliament might never take, action which, indeed, he would say Parliament would not take this year whatever that House might do; and it came to this: that the Commissioners were asked to anticipate the action of Parliament in some future year. The Home Secretary had given the go-by to that important question, but he should ask him what action the Government proposed to take with respect to the Ecclesiastical Commission? Did the Government think they could restrain the action of the Commission by the votes of new Commissioners from voting money to the Church in Wales, or did they intend to rely on the Lord President of the Council, as the particular member who was able to give validity to acts of the Commission by sanctioning orders by Her Majesty in Council which ratified their schemes? Did they expect him to stop any or every grant to Wales, without regard to the merits of the case? That would be an attempt to bring political interpretation to bear on the Acts of Parliament entrusted for administration to the Commission, and he thought that was thoroughly unjustifiable. He asked the Home Secretary did he omit the Ecclesiastical Commissioners from the Motion on the Paper because he thought the Government were strong enough to restrain the Commissioners without the Bill? or were the Ecclesiastical Commissioners to go on making provision for the Church in Wales as usual? The Bill had no precedent before it; it would only waste the time of Parliament. It was not likely to secure the assent of Parliament during the present year, and he hoped the House, under these circumstances, would interpose in this stage and refuse leave altogether to bring in such a Bill.

#### Amendment proposed,

To leave out from the word "That," to the end of the Question, in order to add the words "it is inexpedient and unjust to interfere by legislation with the operations of the Church in the Welsh dioceses, while the principle of an alteration in the relations between Church and State in that part of the United Kingdom has not been adopted by Parliament,"—(*Sir John Gurst.*)

—instead thereof.

*Sir John R. Mowbray*

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question."

\***MR. STUART RENDEL** (Montgomeryshire) said there were 31 Members of that House from Wales, who would naturally regard it as their first duty and highest privilege to speak on this occasion. They did not, however, conceive that on the First Reading of a Bill of this character any prolonged Debate was necessary. At the same time, they felt it was only reasonable and respectful that some statement of the case for Wales should be made by the Welsh Members, and they had done him the honour of entrusting to him that statement on their behalf. He, therefore, earnestly asked for the kindly forbearance of the House. The first observation which the Welsh Members had to make was that in this matter of the Disestablishment of the Church in Wales they were not actuated by any hostility to the Church. Wales desired that the Church should be free, strong, and reconciled to the people. That desire was sincere, and it would be unfortunate if this Bill should be regarded as any attack upon religion. The Welsh people were a religious people, and they were not actuated by any hostility to the religious organisation which was unquestionably doing a very great work in the Principality. It was not to the Church that there was any hostility, but it was to the Establishment. That was no fanciful distinction. One had only to look at the history of the Church in Wales to see that the State manipulation of the Church was the root of all the evil, and that the remedy for that evil was nothing more nor less than the removal of the Establishment. He could not say that the English Church in Wales had ever borne the character of a National Church. From the first the Church of England in Wales, whether Augustinian, Latin, or Anglican, call it what you will, had been a Church of conquest. In proof of this he might be allowed to quote from the famous Petition of the Welsh Princes to the Pope—

"The Archbishops of Canterbury, as if it were a matter of course, send among us English Bishops, ignorant alike of both our customs and our language, and who can neither preach the Word of God to the people, nor receive their confessions except through interpreters. These Bishops arriving from England love neither ourselves nor our country; but, on the contrary

vex and persecute us with a hatred rooted and national; they seek not the good of our souls, but only aspire to rule over, and not to benefit, us. For which reason they do not often labour amongst us in discharge of their ministerial functions; but whatever they can lay hold of, or obtain from us, whether justly or unjustly, they take away to England, and there live luxuriantly and wastefully upon wealth derived from the monasteries and lands given to them by the Kings of England."

**AN hon. MEMBER:** What date is the author?

**MR. RENDEL** replied that this was a quotation from an historical document of the 12th century. An argument was founded on the venerable character of the English Church in Wales, and he was going back to the origin to show how that Church had been manipulated by England for secular objects from the earliest times. He would come down to the 15th century and quote from an eloquent and earnestly devoted Churchman—Dean Edwards, of Bangor—who wrote that—

"The burning of the cathedral at Bangor, and of the cathedral, episcopal palace, and canon's houses at St. Asaph in North Wales, and the destruction in the same year (A.D. 1402) of the castle of the Bishop of Llandaff, and of the house of his archdeacon in the south, were indications of the popular hatred of the Cymric people towards a system which degraded the spiritual officers of the Church into instruments for the accomplishment of a selfish earthly policy."

They had, he contended; a history of the unbroken manipulation of the Church by the State—by England—not in the interest of religion, but in the interests of the earthly policy of the English Government in Wales. From 1745 the Church in Wales was not only not National, but it was distinctly anti-National. For 150 years, from 1720, not one Welsh-speaking clergyman was appointed to a bishopric in Wales. Over all that period the policy of English statesmen appeared to have been to denationalise Wales, to destroy the language of the Welsh people, and to do that through the instrumentality of the Establishment in Wales. He said that not in order in any way to cast reproach at the present moment upon the Church as a Church. The Church was the victim, and not the author, of Establishment. It was the Establishment that was the instrument of all the wrongdoing, and it was at the Establishment that Wales, ever since household suffrage and the Ballot had

given it freedom, was, with accumulating energy, aiming, and was now striking, this last and final blow. Wales desired to be at peace with the Church, but at peace upon honourable terms of mutual respect and equal rights. Wales repudiated as a calumny and a wilful perversion of the true issue the charge of hostility to the Church based upon the assault on Establishment. Church and Establishment were not convertible terms, and it was easy to show that the Church Party did not in truth treat the Church and Establishment as one and the same thing outside Wales. He observed that those who led the Opposition in this matter—and he would take such authorities as the Archbishop of Canterbury and the two Houses of Convocation—were as much opposed to Disestablishment in Scotland as in Wales. But in Scotland the Establishment was a Presbyterian Body, while alongside it was the twice Disestablished Church occupying the position of Dissent. Therefore, to maintain Establishment in Scotland was to maintain Establishment at the expense of the Church. In short, the English Church was fighting in Scotland for the establishment of schism, and in Wales was urging on Welsh Churchmen to fight against Welsh Nonconformity as being schism. In both Wales and Scotland the English Church was sacrificing the interests of the Church to the interests of Establishment. Their case against the Establishment was this: The Welsh had been rightly called a nation of Nonconformists. Welshmen were as legitimately proud of their evangelisation of Wales a century back by Nonconformity as Englishmen were of their Reformation two centuries earlier; and it was intolerable to them that they should have to endure an Establishment to this day, which gave a spiritual monopoly in Wales to the very religious body which had so cruelly betrayed and abandoned Wales, which set upon the people of Wales the reproach of religious schism, and which cast upon the Welsh ministers, who had brought religion to the Welsh people, the stigma of spiritual illegitimacy. A practical part of the grievance was that it was the Establishment which killed the Church in Wales. In the immediate past there had been a deliberate policy of starvation pursued which had reduced the people at

one time to nearly spiritual destitution. At the present time the policy forced upon the Church in Wales, not in the interests of Wales, but in the interest of the Establishment, was a policy of proselytising, that is of religious civil war. The Welsh were, perhaps, the most religious of the four peoples of the United Kingdom. Nonconformity had made of Wales a garden of religion, and the Establishment now called upon the Church to come in like some ground landlord to assert possession of the spiritual monopoly of Wales and take the benefit of all the unearned religious increment, and to say to Nonconformity, "You are intruders; make room for me." That was not an extravagant way of putting it. Recently *The Standard* devoted its first leading article to the question of Disestablishment in Wales, and, commenting upon a speech of his charging the Establishment with proselytism, asked boldly of the clergymen of Wales, "What are they there for but for that?" It was perfectly clear and admitted that proselytising by the Church in Wales was now practised not in the interests of the Church in Wales, but of the Establishment. But it was too late. There was no room for the recovery of Wales by the Establishment. • What was remarkable in Wales was what he might term the religious overcrowding. In one of his famous speeches Mr. Bright declared that Wales was penetrated with religion; every nook and corner of it was filled with religion. He agreed with that; and, indeed, the overcrowded state of its religious machinery was notorious. In regard to Church machinery, Wales was, relatively to England, largely overstocked. In England the dioceses, although increased of late by six in number, were as 1 to 820,000 population. In Wales they were as 1 to 420,000. In the same way in England the benefices were in the proportion of 1 to 1,910 of the population, and in Wales 1 to 1,550; this, too, in a country where the people were mainly Nonconformists. There could be no doubt that the Church machinery in Wales was vastly greater in proportion to Church people than it was in England; and it was clear if the Church was to grow, it must and could grow only at the expense of the Nonconformists. This was, therefore, not a battle against unbelief; it was simply

*Mr. Rendel*

a predatory aggression by the Church of the rich and the alien against the Churches of the people. He should like to be allowed to illustrate from his own county and diocese how the Establishment had operated in Wales. Comparatively recently—i.e., in the year 1834—in the County of Montgomeryshire, Church livings amounting to £13,930 a year were enjoyed by sinecurists and absentees, almost without exception relatives of the Bishop of the diocese, whilst the aggregate income of the working resident clergy amounted to £8,511? Early in the present century a Bishop of St. Asaph had managed to confer upon himself and those of his own household £23,629 a year, whilst the entire body of the resident working clergy divided amongst them £18,391. From 1745 to 1830 out of 83 higher preferments 73 were held by Englishmen. This was the manner in which English Establishment operated in Wales in the immediate past. How was the Establishment now dealing with the Church? Under the working of Establishment it fell to Lord Salisbury of late to select a new Welsh Bishop, and he would ask the House to remember Lord Salisbury's view as to the position of the Church in Wales as described in his famous Newport speech. His Lordship was speaking amongst a great mass of Nonconformists, and he solemnly asserted to Wales that all the machinery by which God's Word had been preached, and Christianity upheld, by which the ministration of religion had been carried to suffering humanity, would be destroyed at one blow if the Church were disestablished. Those words amounted to this: that Lord Salisbury absolutely ignored the existence of Nonconformity, and regarded Wales as dependent upon the Establishment for any sort of religious life. In such circumstances Lord Salisbury's appointment of the Bishop of St. Asaph was an excellent example of the mischievous working of the principle of Establishment. That appointment had strictly reflected Lord Salisbury's attitude towards Nonconformity in Wales, and had, therefore, been coincident with a serious increase of the worst features of religious strife. It was notoriously a purely political, polemical, partisan appointment. It came to this: that, within his (Mr. Rendel's) lifetime, the Church throughout

the diocese of St. Asaph had, through the Establishment, suffered from a stifling of religion due to religious torpor, and was now suffering from an exacerbation of religion, due to religious strife. How was that strife engendered? The Premier laid the seed of it by a political use of his patronage. He set an example of such use to the Bishops. The Bishops in Wales had an even larger share of the patronage in their diocese than was possessed by the English Bishops. The Bishops of Wales practically appointed all the Church dignitaries in their dioceses. The Bishop of St. Asaph, for instance, appointed the Dean, Prebendaries, and Canons, and out of 217 benefices in the diocese he had the appointment in no less than 115. He was in a position to make or mar the career of his clergy, and it was a case of "like master like man." It was not long ago that he actually made it a boast that 16 Nonconformist ministers, not one of whom he named, had called on him with reference to changing their faith. If the Bishop had had nothing to give away, neither privilege nor patronage, there would have been no slur cast upon the whole Nonconformist ministry of his diocese. But here the Bishop was placed in a position of rewarding change of faith in the ministry, which they held was a most undesirable one. One Bishop had publicly repudiated militant proselytism, but another had boasted of a form of proselytism that was peculiarly cruel. He had boasted that the majority of children whom he confirmed were those of Nonconformist parents. Now, the people of Wales had not the command of elementary schools they ought to have—and there were thousands of Nonconformist children in Church-managed schools. The Bishop did not state whether or how he obtained the consent of the Nonconformist parents to the confirmation, and, considering the age at which children were confirmed and the scale of the proceeding, he (Mr. Rendel) looked on the proceeding as a kind of kidnapping.

\*MR. V. GIBBS (Herts, St. Albans): Does the hon. Member suggest that these children were brought forward for confirmation without their parents' consent?

MR. RENDEL could only say that no statement was made that the consent of the parents had been obtained. What

was stated was that the parents were Nonconformists; and knowing the tender years at which children were now confirmed, it was not unreasonable to characterise with a strong word the taking of such children for confirmation. If it were not for the dire necessity which assailed the Church in Wales for proselytising, so as to say that it was gaining ground on Nonconformity, no such attempt would be made by what they considered to be an unfair method. They had heard that this outcry about proselytism simply amounted to a confession on their part that the Church in Wales was recovering spiritual possession of Wales, and that they were merely wincing under defeat. He must say that they were entitled to protest against this proselytism upon one plain and incontrovertible ground. In a competition between religious sects the State ought not to take sides. If there was to be this unhappy rivalry between the religious denominations in Wales, at any rate let the most powerful Body—the Church—fight fair, and let not the State take one part, and that the part of the rich, the few and the English in the competition. The Church, if it is to fight the religion of the people of Wales, must surrender its State aid and subventions. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Oxford University spoke about the doings of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners; but if the right hon. Gentleman were present now, he would ask him about the £30,000 or £40,000 a year given to the Church in Wales by the English Ecclesiastical Commissioners in order to fight this cruel battle with the denominations. They in Wales were to submit to such modes of attack, not for the sake of England, not for the sake of Scotland and Ireland, least of all for our colonial Empire or Dependencies, but because the Established Church in England chose to regard the four Welsh dioceses as an outwork of the Establishment to be defended by all the resources of the great English Establishment. The answer, so far as they could gather, of the Church to the argument for Welsh Disestablishment, was the old ecclesiastical answer—*non possumus*. We cannot disestablish the Welsh Church because there is no Welsh Church to disestablish. What is called the Welsh Church is simply four of the dioceses



of the Province of Canterbury. It had been said that they would be cutting and carving the English Church. But out of the 24 dioceses of England six new dioceses had been cut and carved already; they had been added to the Establishment, and now all that Wales asked was that four should be subtracted from the Establishment. Be it remembered that the Church of England and Establishment were not one and the same thing. The Church was far wider than Establishment. Of its 120 dioceses only 34 were within the Establishment. What harm could it do to the Church to transfer four dioceses from the smaller and more sterile side of the Church to the larger and more growing side? What had the Church to answer to that? If it could be shown that it was for the good of Wales as Wales that Disestablishment should not take place, and that the Suspensory Bill as a preliminary to Disestablishment should not pass, then let the House of Commons give judgment to that effect. Wales would then consider that position with respect, but no attempt had been made to show that. What Wales with practically one voice now demanded was that the House of Commons should now record its verdict that the time had come when the English Church should no longer continue to impose upon Wales the burden of Establishment in the interest—not of Wales, or of the religion of Wales, or of the Church in Wales, but of the Establishment in England. The Welsh were a law-abiding people, but they suffered a cruel injustice in this matter. Their religious, social, and political life had been poisoned by it, and they asked the House of Commons that not merely for the interest of the Establishment in England, not merely in order to give a little longer lease of life to a system of State intervention in religion, which was tottering to its fall—to a system which was repudiated by the English-speaking people of the Empire and of the world—should England impose upon Wales a continuance of the present evil, or perpetuate in Wales an alien domination which he believed, so far from being a bulwark of the Church in Wales, was, in truth, its bane?

\*MR. V. GIBBS said, the Home Secretary had introduced an unprecedented measure committing them to the principle of Disestablishment, and it would not be

reasonable if Disestablishment were not to follow. The Prime Minister told them that it would not be during this year that that measure could be dealt with; but if it could not be dealt with then, who could say what Government might be in power, or what opportunities there might be for introducing the measure? He, for one, was of opinion that the Suspensory Bill would inflict an injury on the Church of England in Wales during the period of its existence. By way of reconciling them to the introduction of the Suspensory Bill, the Home Secretary told them that they would be able to give effect to their opinions in the Lobby, but in the present state of Parties that was not a very satisfactory position. The Home Secretary had said that they wished to hand back to the nation national property, which was now enjoyed by one particular Body only. But that was an argument which they altogether denied. They said that the nation held that property as Trustees for the Church, and that the Church received it from pious sons of its own for a particular purpose. That being so, it was not a sufficient argument, even if it were admitted that the majority of the Welsh people were against the continued existence of the Church of England in Wales, to make them give up the money which was provided for a particular purpose. Although the Prime Minister might not now accept the doctrine that the nation held the property of the Church as Trustees for the Church, during a great many years of his life the right hon. Gentleman would have agreed that this property belonged to the Church and not to the State. The Home Secretary further said he supposed they would admit that those who belonged to the English Church were certainly not more than a quarter of the population of Wales, but Census after Census would show that the position of the Church in Wales had improved, and that the position of the Nonconformist Bodies had fallen off. The Home Secretary also dealt with the question of Scotland; but it did not compare in any way with the position in Wales, because the right hon. Gentleman said, "The Church in Wales is an organic part of the English Church." But the right hon. Gentleman said, "Do not press that point too far." How far would

*Mr. Rendel*

they carry it? He had confidence that if the Church felt it could not properly administer the funds in its hands for the religious benefit of the people in Wales, it would itself define an alteration of that condition of affairs. Another reason given by the right hon. Gentleman was that the Church would recover from the staggering blow of the loss of its endowments. But why should a man in good health submit to a serious operation such as having his leg taken off? No doubt he might live after it; but he would not be so useful a member of society. And if the Church in Wales were crippled by this Bill, which would deprive it of the best and most educated young men who were willing to come forward and enter its ministry, it would be less useful than it was now. It was said that they ought not to consider filthy lucre; but, in his opinion, a man would be a fool to accept a living from which he was liable at any moment—after the Home Rule Bill had been passed and the Prime Minister had had time to give his attention to this matter—to be removed, in which case he would find himself thrown on the world without means of support. The hon. Member for Montgomeryshire had treated them to some interesting antiquarian reminiscences concerning the Church in the 12th century, and his argument was that it did too little in the past and too much in the present. The hon. Member rather represented the position as if the Nonconformists and the Church were rival traders doing business in a restricted area, and it was desirable to get the Church out of the way because it was taking away business from the opposition trader. The hon. Member said the Church was showing far too much activity; but that was their argument for its existence as a Church in Wales, and if English money was used to help the Church in Wales, it was a proof that the Church was one in the two countries. The hon. Member had attacked the Bishop of St. Asaph very severely, and it was perfectly clear that if there was one person the Welsh Members disliked it was that Bishop. It was said that his appointment was a “political and polemical” one, but no one would believe that Lord Salisbury had appointed him for a political purpose. He did not believe that any Prime Minister for many years had allowed

political considerations to govern such matters. The dreadful charge brought against the Bishop of Asaph was that 16 Nonconformist Ministers had applied to him to be admitted to holy orders. Was it suggested that the Bishop went about canvassing for these men? The suggestion that these Nonconformist ministers went into the Church for the sake of the loaves and fishes was an insult so gross that no Member on the Opposition side of the House would have dared to make it. Another charge had been made that children were brought forward for confirmation who were of Nonconformist parentage. The hon. Member was a little disingenuous in that matter, for he said the Bishop said nothing as to whether the parents’ consent had been obtained. He interrupted the hon. Member, and asked him whether it was suggested that the parents’ consent had not been obtained, and the hon. Member did not answer that question.

Mr. RENDEL said, he had replied that he did not know whether the parents’ consent had been obtained. What he wanted to show was that the children of Nonconformists had been brought to confirmation.

\*Mr. V. GIBBS said, he did not think the position was very much altered. Of course, the Bishop had the consent of their parents. It was this Bishop who had made the Church popular amongst the people, so much so that it was felt that the Church would get such a hold upon the people that it would be impossible to injure it; therefore, in order to tie a rope round the neck of the Church, or to knock it on the head, there was this hurry and bustle to introduce an unprecedented measure. It was asked why they supported the Establishment in Scotland as well as in Wales. What sympathy had they with the Presbyterian Establishment? His answer was that the Church Party sympathised with the recognition of religion throughout every part of the British Empire such as was involved in an English Establishment. They felt that the Scotch Church did recognise the principle of religion, and that in poor and scattered districts it provided for religion in a way that Nonconformity could not do. There was another reason why they supported the Establishment in Scotland; a purely selfish though

highly sensible reason. They knew that *paries cum proximus ardet* their house would soon, too, be burning, and they believed the Scotch would help them if they themselves were assisted. It was said this was not a battle against unbelief at all, but really a battle to secure greater advantages for religious sects. He believed it was a desire to get hold of the money of the Church, and this really was at the bottom of the Bill, of the Home Rule Bill for Ireland, and was at the bottom of alterations of the government of the City. The allegation was that the government in these places was bad, but the fact was that they had revenues or funds under their control which would fall into other hands if the Government fell. What was called the predatory instinct had been appealed to throughout the country. The suave and dulcet tones were left for this House, but outside the people were constantly reminded of the fact that there was a lot of money about, and some of it would fall to the share of the people if they only burst the thing up. Of this he was perfectly certain: that the question of the funds—the loot as he might call it—that was to come out of this was at the bottom of the matter. They would never hear about Church Disestablishment or Suspensory Bills if it were not that Disendowment was bound to follow.

MR. A. G. BOSCAWEN (Kent, Tunbridge) said that though he represented an English constituency, he had lived all his life in Wales, and he claimed to know both the strength of the Church and Nonconformity, and having seen how the Church had gone ahead during the last few years, whilst Nonconformity had declined, he ventured to ask the indulgence of the House whilst he made a most emphatic protest against the Bill. The Bill was absolutely unprecedented. The Bill of 1868 had been quoted as a precedent, but that Bill did not pass; and the Irish endowments stood upon a very different footing, inasmuch as they were not given to the Irish Church, as were the Welsh endowments, by pious members of the Church, consequently the State had no right, as they had with the Irish Church, to take them away. They had been told this was national property; but he would ask hon. Members if they would set up their opinions

against the opinions of Lord Seldon, Professor Freeman, Professor Stubbs, and against the opinion of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Midlothian (Mr. Gladstone). He did not wish to misquote the right hon. Gentleman, but he was of opinion he had said the difference between Church and other property was this: that other property was devoted to persons, and Church property to purposes—to sacred purposes—which was an additional reason why the State should not interfere to rob the Church. He would ask if there was any adequate reason for this Bill? He thought the real reason was to be found in the speech of the Home Secretary (Mr. Asquith). It was necessary that the Church in Wales should be done to death by this slow process in order that the wheels of Home Rule should be greased. Hon. Gentlemen below the Gangway who wanted Disestablishment said that if the Government would support them they would support the Government. That might be a pleasant system of Party politics, but he strongly protested against it in the name of his constituency and of Protestantism; he was strongly against the Church being robbed for a purely political object. He had already said that every living authority except the Home Secretary had declared that the Church property and tithes were not national property. Professor Freeman said, "Church property is not national property, except in the sense that all property is national property." The right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary said, "The question was settled by the Act of 1869." He (Mr. Boscawen) said, if Parliament then transgressed its moral right, that is no reason why it should do so again; two blacks did not make a white, and because Parliament acted wrongly then there was no reason why it should do so again. The argument that Church property was national property was an argument against the Bill, because, if so, the English Church property was also national property; and why should the Church in Wales be treated differently from the Church in England? This Bill aimed at separate treatment, and what arguments had they for that? Only two: the historical and the statistical. As to the historical argument, they did not hear so much now about the alien

Church; the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Midlothian pricked the bubble of the alien Church when he said—

“So far from being an alien Church, the Church in Wales is the oldest Institution in the country, the oldest branch of the National Church. It has grown up from generation to generation with the people of this country, the old British Church that was established there in the second or third century after Christ.”

And the hon. Member for Montgomeryshire (Mr. Stuart Rendel) would have them believe that was not the case. The Church in Wales had been in existence for eight centuries before the date to which the hon. Member for Montgomeryshire referred as its origin. The historical argument could not possibly be brought forward. As to the statistical argument, that could not be brought forward as a reason for the Bill; there had been many assertions similar to that which the Home Secretary had made as to the number of Churchmen and Nonconformists in Wales, but it was an extraordinary thing that these assertions did not agree. In 1871 Sir Watkin Wynn stated that the Church was only one-sixth of the population. In 1886 Mr. Dillwyn put it at one-eighth of the population; in 1891 the hon. Member for Montgomeryshire said it was one-sixth; while in 1892 the hon. Member for Flintshire said that it was one-fourth, and in the same year the hon. Member for Carnarvon said that he could prove, and that he had proved, that it was one-tenth of the population. As the population was 1,700,000, there was a large discrepancy between one-fourth and one-tenth of that population. Under these circumstances, the *onus probandi* lay with the Home Secretary when he told the House that the members of the Church in Wales were a small minority. It was said that the result of the elections proved that the Church was in a small minority in Wales. He was surprised to think that, when a dozen questions were jumbled up together, as they were in the Newcastle Programme, with the question of Home Rule at the top, and the majority of Members from Wales were returned upon that Programme, it should be said that was any test of the number of people who attended the Church in Wales. In order to get at the views of the people, there must be taken not the

aggregate number of Members returned, but the aggregate number of people who voted on each side. There voted for the Unionists at the last Election 63,892, and for the Gladstonians 106,504—that was to say, there were two Church people to every three Nonconformists. Two to three was a very different matter to one-tenth, one-sixth, or one-fourth, or whatever the figures might be. He ventured to say that before long the two and the three would change places, and instead of the supporters of the Church being two-fifths and the Nonconformists three-fifths of the voters, the supporters of the Church would be three-fifths and the Nonconformists two-fifths. This was a very rough test; but when the question of a religious census was brought forward, there were no more bitter opponents of it than these very people who claimed they were the vast majority; and he would like to ask the House if they were to accept the assertion of men who dared not put the thing to a fair test and yet brought nothing forward but assertion and the rough test of an election, the figures in regard to which disproved the assertion. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Midlothian said, “The Church in Wales is an active, living, and progressive Church,” and the right hon. Gentleman (Sir John Gorst) who moved the Amendment distinctly proved to the House the wonderful increase that had taken place in the Church in the last few years. That was an absolute fact that could not be contradicted; and he said when they had this remarkable improvement going on this certainly was not the time to strangle the Church, which was the object of the Bill. Hon. Gentlemen below the Gangway saw this wonderful improvement going on, and they wished to check it, and they knew no better way than to take away the vested interests, and thus prevent the best men from going into the Church; and then hon. Members would turn round and twit the Church with the decline that was going on in consequence of this very Bill, and use it as an argument for further measures. But if they wished to talk about decline, he would venture respectfully to refer to the decline that was manifest on the other side, the extraordinary and undoubted decline of Nonconformity. He would not enter

into the figures, but would do what he thought was better—he would quote from a Nonconformist newspaper. He had two quotations from a paper called the *Golenad*, one of the organs of the Welsh Calvinists. This paper said—

“There has been a fearful falling off during the past year. Scarcely one-third of the members attend the Church meetings. The number of candidates under the charge of the ministers is small and becoming less. It is useless to conceal the fact that the state of the Association is very unsatisfactory.”

Two years later the same paper had the following :—

“One matter we have to complain of in Cardiganshire is the weakness of many of our Churches. The chief evils that afflict us are unchastity, drunkenness, and a spirit of disputation. The Churches have gradually sunk into a state of indifference.”

Only a fortnight ago the same paper wrote as follows :—

“One of the greatest gifts of God is a true leader. The absence of Moses was a serious period to the Israelites, and it was shown that Aaron could not take his place. We do not suggest for one moment that our Connexion is without a leader; we believe that there are as good leaders as we ever had. But there are times when a leader is specially wanted, and we are in that condition now. We have many an Aaron glib of tongue; we do not allege that we have not a Moses; but we ask the question, lest he may be among us and we cannot see him.”

He commended that quotation from the *Golenad* to the House, and asked whether they were to rob the National Church of Wales in order that they might set up the Golden Calf? He said that no reason could be given for the separate treatment of Wales in this matter. Both the historical and the statistical argument failed. The Church had grown and Nonconformity was declining. For all these reasons he entered his emphatic protest against the Bill. It was cruel, unjust, unfair, and absolutely unprecedented, and there was no valid reason on the merits that they could bring forward for passing it. The hon. Member for Montgomeryshire (Mr. Stuart Rendel) said Wales would not suffer because Ireland did not suffer. He ventured to traverse that statement. He had answers that were given to the Bishop of St. Asaph by nearly every Bishop in Ireland on this subject—the Bishops of Tuam, Killaloe, Meath, Ossory, and Derry. The Bishop of Killaloe said—

*Mr. A. G. Boscawen*

“On the whole, the blow dealt to us, however softened, has been the most lamentable, and I fear is likely to be still more so as time goes on.”

He goes on to say—

“The man must be an idiot, I think, who does not see that the attack on the Welsh is just to seize an outwork so as to ensure the most successful assault on the central citadel of the English Church.”

He appealed to the House to consider the Bill in all its aspects, and to say that it was a Bill for which there was absolutely no valid reason; therefore, he asked the House to take the extreme step of rejecting it upon the First Reading.

\*SIR F. S. POWELL (Wigan) said that he felt so desirous of taking part in the Debate that he rose at a period of the evening (8.35) when the appearance of the House was most unattractive. He wished to make some remarks with reference to the speech of the hon. Member for Montgomeryshire (Mr. Stuart Rendel). The hon. Member was in a historical vein, and dealt with the history of the Church not during a century, but during 1,000 years. He had told them in a melancholy tone what was the state of the Church in the Principality during a long period of time. He (Sir F. Powell) ventured to say, however, that with an Institution of such an age there were necessarily periods of decay and seasons when reforms were required. That had been the case with the Army, the Navy, and our Judicial Establishments. Then the hon. Member had made another complaint of proselytism on the part of the Church of Wales at the present moment. The time was not so far distant in history when the great bulk of the people of Wales belonged to the National Church, and he had never heard the Nonconformists charged with proselytism because the Welsh left the old Church and joined the modern Nonconformists. The same causes which brought about the change then were bringing about the change now. The Welsh people turned from the Church to Dissent because the Church was worldly, and they were now turning from Dissent to the Church because Dissent in Wales had become increasingly political. A religious people such as the Welsh would never belong to a Church which was worldly or political in character. The accusation

was made that the friends of the Church in Wales desired to have a spiritual monopoly. Well, he knew many of the Welsh clergy, and never heard of anyone who sought a spiritual monopoly. They desired, and as sincere men they were bound to desire, an increase of religious influence, but there was no desire to act in the spirit of monopoly. They rather desired to see members of other denominations working heartily in a self-sacrificing spirit in the sacred vineyard. Some reference had been made to the large number of benefices in the Welsh dioceses compared with the population; but it ought to be remembered that Wales was a mountainous and agricultural country, and that where that was the case a larger number both of benefices and clergy were necessary for the scattered population. It was a calumnious accusation to say that the 16 Nonconformist ministers who sought ordination for the Church did so for the sake of filthy lucre, and were animated by a mere worldly and selfish ambition. He would also say, in reply to the hon. Member for Montgomeryshire, that no child in Wales could go through the course of instruction preparatory to confirmation, and be confirmed without the full knowledge and consent of the parents. They were told that if the Church were disestablished and disendowed there would be an increase of energy and new life in it. He presumed that that would lead to an increase of proselytism. Those who brought this charge now were, therefore, strangely inconsistent in recommending a measure which would largely increase that proselytism of which they now complained. He had the fortune, which was not shared by any hon. Member but one, of being able to remember the discussion in 1868, and he was much struck by the contrast between the two cases. In 1868 they were told by the Prime Minister that the Irish Church only numbered amongst its adherents one-eighth of the population. No one would venture to say that so small a proportion would be an accurate representation of the Church in Wales. It was stated also there were no poor belonging to the Irish Church. No one would venture to say that of the Church in Wales. On the contrary; it was impossible that the

figures they had as to the confirmations and communicants, and as to the numbers attending, the rites of the Church could apply to other than the humbler classes. He thought the Opposition had a right to complain that they were without figures in this matter. In 1891, on the Census Debate, many of them desired a religious census, but it was defeated because of the great irritability and alarm shown by the Nonconformists; and those Liberals who now made allegations in regard to Members were not entitled to bring them, because they refused to secure accurate information. Since 1873, there had been spent in the building of churches in Wales £639,000, and in the restoration of churches £488,000, the two sums together amounting to upwards of £1,100,000. It was said that the churches were built by the wealthy and not frequented by the poor; but he could not believe himself that any person, however wealthy, would be so foolish as to spend that large amount of money in the erection of churches except they believed those churches would be resorted to by the population. He thought this was one of those charges which entirely refuted itself. It was perfectly clear there was a large increase in the number of those who desired to attend the services of the Church in Wales. He had before him some figures which would be of some interest, as they related to the Diocese of St. David's. St. David's had been referred to in the course of the Debate as a model diocese. From 1846 to 1888 131 parsonage houses had been built, and the number of non-resident incumbents had fallen from 174 to 7. During 12 years the confirmation candidates had increased 25 per cent., rising from 7,000 in the period ending 1883 to 9,000 in the last triennial period. In 1881 there were 16,000 children in the Church schools of the diocese, and in 1888 there were 63,000 children. The hon. Gentleman opposite had said that religion was safe with the Welsh people. He did not traverse that allegation; but he would make this remark: that he would not trust religious education to the people of Wales. And his reason was this: In examining the statement made with reference to School Board schools in the Municipality, he found that according to the reports there was

a most lamentable and distressing absence of instruction on religious subjects, which was a matter of ill-omen and sad promise for the people of Wales. Comparing this Debate with the Debates on the Irish Church, there was this great difference: that now nothing was said about the alien character of the Church in Wales, and they had not heard that it insulted the Welsh language. The history of the Welsh Church was known to those who investigated these matters, and there could be no doubt that the Church in Wales was really and veritably the ancient British Church. They heard it from the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster a year or two ago that "The Church in Wales is the legitimate historical successor to the Church of St. David." They had it on the highest House of Commons authority, therefore, that the Church of Wales could not be said to be an alien Church as was said of the Church of Ireland. He had been rather struck himself by finding how in poetry as well as in history this fact was believed. Chaucer, who, as they all knew, was an accurate describer of the times in which he lived, in "The Man of Lawes Tale" of the Canterbury Pilgrimage, wrote "To Wales fled the Christianite of Olden Britouns dwelling in this Isle." As to insulting the Welsh language, it must be remembered that it was under the roof of a former Dean of Westminster that the Bible was translated into the Welsh language. There was another circumstance which he had not seen alluded to in the Debate, but which was full of interest—namely, that in the time of Henry VIII. it was decreed that the Welsh language should be used in public services in Wales. That Statute was to be found in the Library. It was framed in strong and emphatic terms, and left no doubt whatever as to the intention of the Legislature. After all that had been said, he could not separate this attack on the Church in Wales from an attack on the Church of England. The Irish Church was separated from us by the sea. Wales was not separated from England by sea, and there were places where the boundary between England and Wales was not distinguished even by a hedge. The more they examined the map or the countries the more they felt the absence of any demarcation between

them. If, then, there was no geographical distinction, he might claim that there was an identity in the Churches. The Prime Minister in 1868 had said of the Welsh Church—

"I suspect that it will be found that it is tied and knotted and tangled—I might almost say in such a multitude of legal bonds and meshes with the general body of the Church of England that it would be a very formidable matter, indeed, to accomplish this purpose."

This was really an attack on the Church of England, and he did not believe that hon. Members opposite would show such a desire for the Disestablishment and Disendowment of the Church in the Welsh dioceses unless they knew that both must stand or fall together. When the Prime Minister introduced his Suspensory Bill in 1868 he proposed to give it effect in 16 months. He described in terms of great eloquence and force the inconvenience of the transitional period. His words were :—

"There will be a very general, or at all events a very extended, opinion among our opponents, as well as among those who support us, that it will be for the interest of all Parties to accelerate the final settlement of the measure."

If that was true then it was true now. They were entitled to know what the interval between the passing of the Suspensory Bill and the Disestablishment of the Church was going to be? What was the transitional period going to lead them to? What was the full flower of which this Bill was only the seed? He would like to ask whether the Government were perfectly sure that their life would exist long enough to enable them to carry a Bill for the Disestablishment and Disendowment of the Church in Wales? For unless they were, then this manner of procedure was cruel and almost persecuting, and full of hardship, tyranny, and wrong. Then he desired to ask another question with all respect. If the Church in Wales was to be removed who was to succeed it? No one could doubt that the Church in Wales, although perhaps not ministering in one sense to the majority of the population, was doing a good and useful work in Wales; and he wished to know who were to succeed and who were the coming prophets—who were to be the teachers of the people? He did not wish for a moment to use language which would give pain to any one of his hon. Colleagues on whichever

*Sir F. S. Powell*

side they sat; but he hoped he might be allowed to give utterance to the anxiety which he felt as to the future religion of the Principality if the Church was Disestablished and Disendowed. His fears arose from the demeanour of the Members for Wales during the discussion of the Clergy Discipline Bill. Those hon. Members, in a manner which drew forth the censure of the present Prime Minister, endeavoured to fix upon the parishes in Wales immoral clergy contrary to the wishes of this House. He could not trust the people of Wales in this matter. Judging the Welsh politicians in this House by their political action, by what he had seen them do, and what he had heard them say, he did not think that any wise or prudent man could close his eyes to the alarming picture of the future which was presented. It was a more happy, and he ventured to say a more holy, duty to fix their eyes upon the increasing good work the Church was now doing in Wales, to observe the causes which were leading to her increased usefulness, and to desire that those works might become more and more abundant; that those causes might receive new force and new power from day to day, and that this ancient Church in Wales might at no distant period number among her devout disciples the majority of the Welsh population, to whose spiritual wants that ancient church had ministered, not always with equal success, but still had administered during many centuries of revolving time.

\*COLONEL SIR E. HILL (Bristol, S.) said, that although not a Welsh Member, nor a Welshman, he had resided for 35 of the last years of his life in Wales, in the old City of Llandaff, and had always worshipped in its venerable Cathedral, and as he naturally took a great interest in the Church in Wales he wished to offer his testimony of the great devotion to the cause of religion he had seen during those years. It appeared to him one of the most extraordinary things that people like the Welsh, who had so much sentiment for their nationality and for their race and descent, should not be proud also of the high position they held in Christianity. Many parts of Wales bristled with the remnants of the old British Church, and why the Welsh should look down upon it and call it an alien Church

it was impossible for him to imagine. So far from being alien, the present Bishop of Llandaff was the ninety-third in direct descent, and tradition carried the sites of the Cathedral to A.D. 50. He freely admitted there had been in times past a great neglect of the Church in Wales, which, for a time perhaps, did not fulfil its functions in the way it might have done, but the same observation would apply in England. What the Church in Wales had been during the 12th century, or during the 15th century, or during the 17th century, was not what they had to consider. What they had to consider was the position of the Church of Wales in this latter part of the 19th century; and he did not hesitate to say there was no religious community which had ever shown a greater desire and activity to perform its high functions properly than the Church in Wales was showing at the present moment. It had been said that it was the Church of the wealthy and not of the poor. But the Sunday evening services in the Llandaff Cathedral were attended in large numbers by the poorer people, many of whom walked several miles. Dealing with a quotation which had been made from a speech of Dean Vaughan, the hon. Gentleman said he considered the statement attributed to the Dean was a misquotation. What the Dean intended to say, he had no doubt, was that there was no Church in Wales which was separate from the Church in England, but that the Church in Wales was always part of the British Church, and therefore they had no Church in Wales to Disestablish. He ventured to hope that this Bill would not pass into law. He regarded it as an attack upon the British Church; an attack which if it succeeded could do other denominations no good, while it would do the Church itself a good deal of harm. What was more, he believed if it were possible to Disestablish the British Church and separate this nation from all connection with Christianity, a very serious blow would be dealt at the prosperity of the nation, and a serious blow at that religion which, he hoped, was dear to them all.

\*SIR T. LEA (Londonderry, S.) said, he was glad to see the President of the Board of Trade on the Treasury Bench. The emptiness of that Bench during the



last half hour had seemed to show that the enthusiasm of the Government for this Bill was not as great as that of the Welsh Members, who, however, had themselves given evidence of their enthusiasm by taking no part in the Debate. He differed from the hon. Member who had just sat down, and the hon. Baronet who had preceded him, on the question of principle. Twenty-five years ago he voted in the Opposition Lobby to the hon. Member for Wigan (Sir F. Powell) on the question of the Disestablishment of the Irish Church, and he was not prepared for a moment to admit that a mistake was made on that occasion. He was constantly hearing that the Church in Ireland had derived strength from its Disestablishment, and he was not prepared to say that the Welsh Church would not also derive strength from its Disestablishment. It was said that the Church of England and the Church in Wales were so closely united that Disestablishment was impossible. He did not agree with this. He remembered that the same argument was used in 1868 with reference to the Irish Church, and he therefore put it aside altogether. Nor did he agree with the hon. Member who had just sat down with regard to the activity of the Welsh Church. He did not see why, if the Welsh Church were set free, it should not continue its increasing activity until it would in time out-number the Nonconformists. But this was not a Disestablishment Bill. Had it been, he might have felt some difficulty as to what he should do. It was extremely probable that hon. Gentlemen from Wales had demanded from the Government that the Church in Wales should be disestablished before the Home Rule Bill became law. Those hon. Gentlemen were wise in their generation. They had carefully totalled up the numbers of the House, and had found that if the Irish Members were not allowed to vote on Welsh questions the Government of the day would be in a decided minority, and they might say farewell for ever to Welsh Disestablishment. As they were forcing this Suspensory Bill on the Government, it seemed to him that there was some bargain between them and the Government on the Disestablishment question. He himself was a Nonconformist. But he disliked to see injustice done to any Church from which he differed.

*Sir T. Lea*

The hanging up of this question because a Disestablishment Bill could not be passed was, in his opinion, an injustice to the Church in Wales to which Welsh Churchmen ought not to be compelled to submit. This was a view which he knew was shared by a considerable number of Members who held his political faith, and he should, therefore, vote against the Suspensory Bill, as he believed it would be likely to inflict injustice on the Church in Wales.

Mr. G. T. KENYON (Denbigh, &c.) said, he agreed with the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary that it had been too much the custom to attribute plunder and robbery to political opponents on this question, and no words which tended in that direction would fall from his lips. He thought, however, he might fairly ask the Home Secretary why, speaking as a great lawyer, he had not given a single precedent for the introduction of such a measure as this, a measure which threatened the whole existence and the whole *ratio vivendi* of the Church in Wales. Of course, he could not compare the humble legal knowledge of a non-practising lawyer with the knowledge which the Home Secretary possessed; but he thought he might fairly say that the reason why no precedent had been produced was that the Home Secretary had been unable to find one. It was stated on good authority that there was no precedent for the course now being pursued by the Government. The differences between the present circumstances and those which surrounded the Irish Suspensory Bill were sufficiently obvious. What was the reason given for the introduction of the Irish Bill? The late Lord Granville, who introduced the Bill in the House of Lords, said—

“The outbreak of Fenianism, its attacks on Canada and its extension in this country, have caused the people of this country to reflect more calmly and dispassionately on the state of Ireland than perhaps at any former period.”

The noble Lord distinctly stated—and the statement was confirmed by many other speakers in both Houses—that the reason for bringing the Bill prematurely forward was the existence of a criminal conspiracy in Ireland. He (Mr. Kenyon) was thankful to say there was no reason to think that anything of the sort existed

in Wales at the present time. The present Prime Minister, speaking with reference to the Irish Suspensory Bill, said, "The House has been asked to vote, and has voted, that the Church in Ireland now established should cease to exist as an Establishment;" and the right hon. Gentleman asked how, when such was the case, it could be expected that the Government would not endeavour to give effect to that decision at the earliest opportunity? Such was not the condition of the question with reference to the Church in Wales. Upon no occasion had any Resolution been carried in the House of Commons affirming the necessity or desirability of Disestablishing or Disendowing the Church in Wales. On the contrary, whenever a Motion to that effect had been submitted in the House of Commons it had been rejected, and rejected by increasing majorities. While in 1886 it was rejected by a majority of 12, in 1889 it was rejected by a majority of 35, and last year it was rejected by a majority of 47. It was said that the opinion of Wales was distinctly in favour of Disestablishment. How was this statement to be substantiated? Was the proof to be found in the amount of room given to the question in the election addresses of Welsh Members? He held in his hand a couple of the election addresses of one Welsh Member who devoted three lines to the subject, and two whole columns to the Newcastle Programme and other matters. He also had the address of the hon. Member for the Swansea District (Sir H. Hussey Vivian), and he said nothing at all about the question of Disestablishment. He only said he was "an animated Liberal," and that he supported the whole policy of Her Majesty's present Government. The right hon. Member for East Denbighshire (Sir George Osborne Morgan) had given some very good advice to his colleagues in Wales, and showed them the advantage of holding themselves close together, asserting their nationality, and proving to Her Majesty's Ministers that they were not to be trampled upon, but were capable of showing their power. What did my hon. Friend say? He said—

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"To those who can read between the lines it has been apparent that upon this, as upon other questions, the Opposition are relying less on the strength of their own case than on the embarrassments of their antagonists. . . . The question for Welshmen is not whether the Disestablishment Bill should have a place among the active objects of the Liberal Party, . . . but what that place is to be . . . to those who, like myself, have listened to 25 Queen's Speeches, and have found that, on an average, not more than half of their promised measures have got beyond a Second Reading, the fact that a 'Suspensory Bill' for Wales has found a place side by side with some dozen others among the proposed Bills of the Session, is not as re-assuring as it would seem to be to some more sanguine but less experienced observers. Now, there are, no doubt, in the present House of Commons many English and Scotch Representatives, whether members of the Liberation Society or not, who desire to establish religious equality in every part of the United Kingdom, and who would warmly welcome a Bill disestablishing and disendowing the Church in Wales, as an instalment of a much larger measure. To these may be added a few stray Liberal Unionists who have not entirely sacrificed their most cherished political convictions to hatred of Mr. Gladstone and of Irish Home Rule. But there are in every Parliament and in every Party a certain number of 'weak-kneed brethren' and of Gallos 'caring for none of these things,' who have to be perpetually kept up to the mark either by pressure of their constituents or by the pressure of the Whips. Many of these men are disposed to regard Welsh Disestablishment with something like the listless indifference which (as Mr. Wallace so feelingly complains) is apt to steal over the House when Scotch measures are discussed, and perhaps they would say there is not much to choose between a 'haggis Debate' and a 'leek Debate.'"

Were the hon. Members (the Welsh Liberals) not using their adherence to the Home Rule Question to bring their own little matters into prominence? And would not the Treasury Bench swallow their measures in return for the support of hon. Members to the Home Rule Bill? Was this Suspensory Bill meant to pass? If it was, he declared it was the grossest attempt to damage the Church, which many hon. Members in their election addresses said they did not wish to damage, that could be conceived. It would be far better to disestablish and disendow them to-morrow than to hang them up for a period which might be limited or which might be unlimited. It would be far better to put them at once under the executioner's knife than to put them in a position which practically cabined, cribbed, and confined all their efforts. Anything in

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the nature of a Bill which practically stopped the operation of the work of the Church in Wales must seriously hamper and damage the cause of religion in the Principality. He was inclined to think the Bill was not intended to pass, but was meant as a sop. He looked upon it in the nature of a bagged fox which was to be turned out whenever they wanted it, and to run which ever way they liked. The only question was whether the hounds would follow it, and his impression was that it would be so deeply tainted with insincerity that when let loose the hounds would throw up their noses and have nothing to do with it. Suppose they carried this Bill, what would be the position of hon. Members opposite when the Home Rule Bill was carried? Where were the supporters going to be obtained to then carry a Bill for Disendowment and Disestablishment, for after getting Home Rule he was sure the Irish Members would not remain in sufficient numbers to make a majority in favour of such a Disestablishment and Disendowment Bill. What would be the position of the Church in Wales if this Bill were carried? Why, the good work which had been done and which was still going on would be hampered and prevented. He admitted that the Nonconformists had done good work in Wales, but surely the Church people were also entitled to some little credit for what they had done in regard to religious effort. He said with reference to this measure what the late Bishop of Peterborough said of the Bill for disestablishing the Irish Church—namely, that justice did not demand this measure; secondly, that policy did not require it; and, thirdly, that the verdict of the country had not been given in its favour. The Home Secretary had told them they were to have generous treatment. He should like the right hon. Gentleman to remember some further words of the late Bishop of Peterborough. They were these—

"The endowment given to a Religious Body is not given for the benefit of that sect, but of the State. It is not given with the view of making the sect richer, but to make the State religious."

If these were true and living words, as he believed they were, he would venture to ask the House to consider the deep re-

*Mr. G. T. Kenyon*

sponsibility they would incur by accepting this Bill. It might be that the Bill would pass this House—it might even be that it would become the law of this land—but he would earnestly ask his Welsh friends, if they indulged in this happy hope, if they seriously imagined this was the end of a great controversy? It was impossible it should be so. By the passing of this Bill they were kindling a flame of discord and animosity which must react on all other legislation affecting the Principality. He, for one, would have no part in this responsibility. It was as alien to his nature, as he believed, if they thoroughly grasped it, they would feel it to be to theirs. Since he had had the honour of a seat in this House, by mutual compromise, by happy accommodation, they had been able to do something (more, perhaps, than in days gone by) for the amelioration of the social welfare of the people. To-day the prospect was fair; the possibilities were yet with them. Do not let them be overclouded by this unnecessary, this cynically cruel and premature proposition. Pause, if it need be, only for a year, before you cross the threshold of a new departure. Take stock of what had been accomplished, and of what still remained to be accomplished, in a common programme untainted by any political aims, and realise to-day, what he honestly believed to be true, the fact that Wales desired more than any Party triumph or Party ascendancy that peace and unanimity which was in accord with her own natural beauties and the prevailing temper of her inhabitants, and would secure to her the greatest amount of liberty consistent with the existence of an Imperial Government.

\***SIR G. OSBORNE MORGAN** (Denbighshire, E.) said, that speeches had been made by the right hon. Member for the University of Cambridge (Sir J. Gorst)—who for clearness of statement and preciseness had not a rival in the House—and the Member for the University of Oxford, one of the oldest and most respected Members in the House. But what had they to do with Wales? They were not Welshmen, neither did they represent Welsh constituencies, and there was the width of the poles between the conditions of the places they repre-

mented and those of Wales. As to the speech of the hon. Gentleman who had just sat down, he had quoted a letter which he (Sir G. Osborne Morgan) had written to the *Manchester Guardian*, for what reason he knew not. He had only to say that he adhered to every word of it. The hon. Member had spoken of the dwindling minorities of the Nonconformists. He would tell him what was the dwindling minority—that was the word—of Welsh Conservative Members. It was said in 1886 that they could all come down to Westminster in a four-wheeled cab, but now they could be accommodated on a double bicycle. One of the arguments urged against the Bill was that it was unprecedented, but that was not the fact. It followed the precedent set by the Prime Minister in 1868, with the difference that it was not preceded by a Resolution, while another precedent was to be found in the Endowed Schools Act of 1869, brought in by Mr. Forster, which was preceded by a Suspensory Bill in 1868. The Bill under discussion could do no harm. If the Church were not disestablished nobody would be the worse for the Bill; and if it were, it would only be right that clergymen who took benefices under this notice should not receive the same compensation as clergymen who took benefices before the notice was given. What was unprecedented was opposing the First Reading of a Bill. He had been in the House nearly a quarter of a century, and the only instance he could remember was on a Bill brought in by Lord Albemarle 24 years ago, dealing with the question of the necessity of Ministers being re-elected on taking office, and that was thought to be so important a constitutional question that it was opposed on the First Reading. The right hon. Gentleman opposite (Sir J. Gorst) said the Church in Wales was doing good work, and they had no right to resist it in its course. Well, he admitted that the Church was doing good work, but it was only in those places where it relied on the piety of its sons and daughters—where, in fact, it was to all intents and purposes a voluntary Church. What was the Church of Wales doing in the rural districts? He did not speak of the work of the Church in the large

border towns, but if they went into the country parishes what did they see? They saw—

"The bee kirk, the free kirk,  
The kirk with the steeple—  
The auld kirk, the cauld kirk,  
The kirk with the people."

It was said that the Church in Wales was not an alien Church. But could it be denied that at the present time the Church had lost its hand on the people of Wales? and as for the argument that the Church in Wales and the Church in England were so inextricably bound up together that they could not disestablish the one without disestablishing the other, that was a very sharp two-edged sword to use; and if he might be permitted to say so, it seemed to him a poor piece of strategy to defend their own citadel at the expense of imperilling the existence of an ally outside. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Cambridge University (Sir John Gorst) referred to the number of parishes in which churches had been built by voluntary contributions. The Church of England clergyman in one of these parishes sent round a circular asking for funds for the erection of new churches in the parish, saying that as there were 13 or 14 Nonconformist chapels and only one church, it was the blackest spot in Wales. The rev. gentleman had managed to build two new churches, but whether they were ever filled or not was a matter he would not enter on. He wished to point out, however, that if the Church in Wales were disestablished and disendowed at the present moment not one sixpence of the cost of building these two churches would be confiscated. One great Unionist Leader, then the Marquess of Hartington, had declared, speaking of the Church of Scotland and the question of its Disestablishment, must be decided by the votes of the Constitutional Representatives of the people of Scotland. Well, the Constitutional Representatives of the people of Scotland in the House were three to two in favour of Disestablishment. Lord Derby had also said—

"The Disestablishment or the maintenance of the Welsh Church ought to depend on the wishes of the Welsh people when authoritatively and clearly expressed."

Who could deny that the wishes of the Welsh people were not now clearly

disclosed in the matter? Then it was said that the Welsh Church was gaining ground, but let them look at the result of the last General Election. The majority of Members in favour of Disestablishment had gone up from 46 per cent. to something like 66 per cent., for out of 30 Members no less than 28 were pledged to Disestablishment. The Bishop of St. Asaph had contended that the religious census showed that the numbers of Nonconformists in the Principality only amounted to 48 per cent. of the population, and he claimed all the rest of the people as members of the Church of England. The Bishop might as well have counted the members of the Blue Ribbon Army in England, and claimed that every other man, woman, and child in the country were drunkards. The only true religious census was the Ballot box, and there was no doubt whatever of the evidence the Ballot box had afforded. If they wanted another test of the feeling in Wales they should look at the number of newspapers which advocated Disestablishment in Wales. There were 15 newspapers in favour of Disestablishment, while on the other side there were no more than two, and one of these was on its last legs. Well, in spite of all this, it was said the Church in Wales was gaining ground. Considering the enormous prizes the Church had to offer to those who fell down to worship it, he would not be surprised if it had gained ground. But Nonconformity had none of those prizes to offer. As had been well said—Nonconformity can offer nothing but a clear conscience and the privilege of paying for it. If the Church of England was gaining ground in Wales, it was gaining ground only in those places where it was to all intents and purposes a voluntary Church. Let them also consider the advance of feeling in Wales on this question. In 1870, when Mr. Williams moved his Motion for the Disestablishment of the Church in Wales, he had only seven of the Welsh Members voting for it—Lord Kenyon and himself were the only two survivors—while 13 voted against it. The opponents of Disestablishment were at that time absolutely two to one, but now they were only one to nine. That did not look as if the Church was gaining ground in Wales. It

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would be said that this was all owing to the fictitious agitation got up by the efforts of agitators in Wales and by the efforts of the Liberation Society. It was nothing of the kind. The fact that the Church was losing ground was not due to the efforts of the agitators—as they were called—or to the efforts of the Liberation Society; it was simply and solely due to the Welsh clergymen themselves, and, above all, the person who had done most to hasten the Disestablishment of the Church in Wales was the Bishop of St. Asaph. When he went down to Wales he found society divided into two opposite camps on the question of Disestablishment. How was it all going to end? It could only end in one way. For

“Freedom’s battle once begun,  
Though baffled oft, is always won.”

They were threatened with many rocks ahead. He admitted that they had many difficulties to meet. No doubt the multiplicity—the vastness—of the Newcastle Programme was one of their difficulties. Then there was the proposed exclusion of the Irish Members, which it was said would be fatal to them, but that measure was not yet passed; and, last of all, there was the House of Lords, the last ditch in which the Conservative Opposition was resolved to die. With all that the Welsh Members had nothing to do. The Welsh Members had a mandate to fulfil, and a duty to their constituents to perform. Please God, they meant to perform that duty, strong in the justice of their cause, strong in the support of the Liberal Party, which had never put its hand to the plough, and then turned back; strong, above all, in the sympathy of the overwhelming majority of their countrymen, they awaited the verdict of the House that night, confident that what Wales thought to-day England would think to-morrow.

LORD RANDOLPH CHURCHILL (Paddington, S.): Mr. Speaker, I have listened to this Debate, and to the portion of it which I heard, with the greatest attention, and I had hoped that there might have been advanced in support of the proposals before the House some argument and proposition which would merit our most serious attention. But, Sir, in that expectation I have been quite dis-

appointed, because there have only been two speeches delivered on that side of the House, with the exception of the speech of the Home Secretary. Of those two speeches, one consisted almost entirely of assertion—and of assertion, so far as I know—founded on a very slender basis. The other speech has just been delivered by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for one of the Divisions of Denbighshire (Sir G. Osborne Morgan); but owing to my own aural imperfections, a great deal more than to any imperfection of the vocal organ of the right hon. Gentleman, I regret to say I was quite unable to follow it, for I hardly heard a single word of it. The House will admit that I am placed in a rather difficult position in endeavouring, as it is the duty of some one on this Bench to do, to carry on this Debate. I think we might have had more assistance from the Home Secretary, who introduced this Bill, and possibly from some of the able Members of the Party who sit behind the Ministry, who ought to be enthusiastic supporters of the project of Disestablishment in Wales. Sir, I will make one or two remarks, if the House will permit me, on the speech of the Home Secretary in introducing the Bill. The right hon. Gentleman asserted the intense desire of the Welsh Members for Disestablishment, and he did me the honour to put to me a question across the Table to the effect that Welsh Members cared more about Disestablishment than Home Rule. The right hon. Gentleman is possibly correct in his interpretation of the desires of the Radical Members for Wales. But I do not understand so unconscious an admission from the Home Secretary, for it has been dinned into our ears for a long while that far overtopping all other topics in the opinion of the right hon. Gentleman, followed by an enthusiastic Party, was the portion of liberty and justice to Ireland, and that the country had given a great mandate on that question, and that it was the duty of the Government to press forward that question with all the energy of which that able group is capable. The admission of the Home Secretary throws a curious light on the truth of this pretence, for he tells us bluntly and with that candour we have reason to expect from him, that the object of the Welsh people is not so much

the passing of Home Rule as it is to obtain Disestablishment of the Church in Wales. This is a candid admission for which I tender him my best thanks, and of which I will endeavour in the future to make the best possible use. The Home Secretary went on to say—or I understood him to say, and he will correct me if I am wrong—that the question of the Welsh Church was an extremely small one, that there was no difficulty in it at all, and that really the question had been settled by the precedent set when the Irish Church was disestablished. Sir, it is perfectly obvious that the Home Secretary has enjoyed the advantages of a brilliant education, but in that education I find one great defect for the position he now holds—he has altogether omitted to study the speeches of his great Leader the First Lord of the Treasury. He said that any Member of this House who imagined that the case of Wales was not completely covered by the case of the Irish Church, and who went back to the old exploded arguments which were used against the Disestablishment of that Church, was a person who ought to be banished to some museum of political antiquity. I am afraid in that museum the right hon. Gentleman would occupy a very prominent place; but it is the last place to which I, at least, or to which any Member of the Party which sits behind me, would consign the speeches on Church Disestablishment made by the right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury. But did the Home Secretary favour the House with any argument for the Disestablishment of the Church in Wales? I could hear nothing—it may be due to some personal defect on my part—but I could hear nothing except denunciation of the Church in Wales, which at times seemed to be almost furious. The old accusations of the Nonconformists against the Church in Wales were delivered with a kind of Nonconformist flavour which I did not expect from the right hon. Gentleman. He assumed a tone in this Debate I did not expect from him. He was not argumentative, he was didactic; he was not persuasive, he was dogmatic; and I do not think that any Nonconformist Representative who speaks on this Bill will be more aggressive and, apparently, more

anxious to light up the flames of religious discord than was the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary. I may just notice one point in the speech of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Denbighshire, where I should like to correct his usually infallible Parliamentary erudition. I understood him to say that there was no precedent of a Bill being rejected on the First Reading.

\*SIR G. OSBORNE MORGAN: I said there was only one precedent in 24 years.

LORD R. CHURCHILL: The right hon. Gentleman is nearly right, for the case took place exactly 23 years ago. It was the case of a Bill which was brought in by Mr. Taylor—a gentleman whom some of us knew very well—and was to provide for the payment of Members of Parliament.

SIR G. OSBORNE MORGAN: I alluded to that Bill, and said it was the only exception.

LORD R. CHURCHILL: Then, again, I must blame my aural defect. But I will leave that case, remarking that curiously enough the Bill was rejected on the Motion of the present First Lord of the Treasury, and it was defeated by a large majority. I confess I do not expect a similar good fortune will fall to us on the present occasion. Now, Sir, I turn to the grave question raised and the position in which those who differ from the Party opposite find themselves with regard to this Bill. Sir, the Home Secretary said the procedure adopted on the present occasion was a perfectly regular and natural procedure. I take leave to traverse that statement. These questions of Church Establishment, when they are raised in Parliament for discussion with the object of change and modification, are, I think everyone will admit, the gravest questions which can be raised, for they affect so deeply and permanently not only the political, but also the social, condition of the State. I think you cannot be too careful, in dealing with such questions, to adhere to the old traditions of Parliament and to all the customs of the House of Commons, and to see, if you mean to deal with an Established Church, what precedent you can most safely follow. I will put the great precedent which I think interposes between the course which the Govern-

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ment wish the House to pursue and the adoption of that course by the House. In 1868 the right hon. Gentleman the present Prime Minister moved a Resolution in Committee in reference to the Irish Church, which was—

“That it is necessary that the Established Church of Ireland should cease to exist as an Establishment, due regard being had to personal interests and individual rights of property.”

The House debated that Resolution on the Motion that the Speaker leave the Chair for four nights, and in Committee for three nights more. Let me read to the House what the present Prime Minister said in pressing these Resolutions on the House of Commons, and I particularly draw the attention of the Home Secretary to it, for he said that the right hon. Gentleman being then the Leader of the Opposition it was necessary to move a Resolution, but that to do so now would be a waste of time. If I go into the question of a waste of time, I am not at all clear that this Suspensory Bill is not a waste of time. It would, at any rate, have shown more sincerity in their policy if they had outright introduced a Disestablishment Bill. The right hon. Gentleman said—

“I should not be justified in endeavouring to shelter myself under the freedom of a Member of the Opposition from distinctly intimating to the House and to the country the general basis of the measure I wish to suggest.”

And the right hon. Gentleman went on to say—

“He would recognise in his measure every vested interest, would preserve to the Church her sacred fabrics and the residences of the clergy, would compensate fully the proprietors of advowsons, and respect recent endowments.”

He said that—

“Probably three fifths, possibly two-thirds, of the entire possessions of the Irish Church would remain in the hands of the Anglican community.”

That was the way—the cautious and the just way—in which the right hon. Gentleman in those days approached this great question of Disestablishment. That was the treatment he meted out to Ireland. But on what grounds does the Home Secretary say there is no difference between the case of the Irish and the case of the Welsh Church? There is a very great difference indeed, as I shall be able to show the Home Secretary,

and the difference is entirely in favour of the Welsh Church. I would again refer to the speeches of the First Lord of the Treasury—those speeches which the Secretary of State has, I think, most unfortunately, and to his loss, neglected, because, Sir, this is the merit of those speeches, and the right hon. Gentleman is probably the only man in this House who does not set a proper high value on them. The merit of those speeches is this, that they certainly come from an authority than whom there was no higher in this House at that time on ecclesiastical questions. Whatever the circumstances were in 1871, when the speech I am going to quote was made, the circumstances are infinitely stronger now in favour of the contention of the right hon. Gentleman. The right hon. Gentleman said—

“I would not say what it would be right to do provided Wales was separated from England in the same way as Ireland, and provided the case for Wales stood in full and complete analogy to that of Ireland in regard to religious differences, but the direct contrary of this is the truth. It is practically impossible to separate the case of Wales from that of England.”

And the right hon. Gentleman went on to say—and the Home Secretary will be surprised to hear—that the difficulties of Church Disestablishment were great, and that he knew them well. He said—

“I know the difficulties, and I am not prepared in any shape or form to encourage the increase of expectations which it would be most unworthy, most guilty, most dishonourable to entertain on our part lest we should convey a virtual pledge. We cannot go in that direction, we deprecate it, and we should regard it as a national misfortune.”

That was in 1871, three years after the Disestablishment of the Irish Church. The Home Secretary says that the Irish Church covers the case of the Church in Wales. Against the authority of the Home Secretary, which I admit is great, and which I expect will become greater, I now confidently set the authority of the First Lord of the Treasury. What does the First Lord of the Treasury, through his Home Secretary, ask Parliament to do? He asks Parliament to do, in this year of grace 1893, what he would not allow either himself or his Government to do in 1871. I venture, with great respect, to remind the right hon. Gentleman that if he condescends to enlighten our ignorance on this side

of the House, there is this point he must get over: he must state what particular circumstance alters the strength and truth of the doctrine he laid down in those days. But now the right hon. Gentleman not only departs apparently from his opinion as to the state of the case of the Irish Church when contrasted with the Welsh Church, but so far as I could judge from the attitude of his own Home Secretary, apparently also with pride, and certainly with most perfect unconcern, he proposes to subject the Welsh Church to much more cruel and unjust treatment than he ever dreamed of in the case of the Church of Ireland. He asks Parliament to give what amounts to a pledge, that at such and such a time in the future the Welsh Church shall be Disestablished and Disendowed; and Parliament is to give that pledge without any proper inquiry, without knowing in the least degree how the Welsh Church is going to be dealt with, and with no information as to the position of that Church and the policy of the Government. The House of Commons is asked practically to say this: We will pledge ourselves by the strongest action in our power—that is, by passing a measure into law—to disestablish the Church in Wales; and we pledge ourselves, if that measure for Disestablishment is not carried out, at any rate the Church in Wales shall be gradually starved, and shall be killed virtually by inches. That is really, in plain English, the interpretation of the step which Parliament is asked to take. I ask the House, did they ever hear such—I cannot call it anything less than—arrant folly? Do they consider what an unholy oath the Parliament is asked to take? Sir, does the right hon. Gentleman, or do his Colleagues and do his Party, seriously consider the circumstances of the present Parliament? If they do, would they not say that the arrogance of demanding such a pledge from Parliament is intolerable? Sir, I cannot comment on the action of the Welsh Members in this matter, which seems very extraordinary. I cannot, if I would, call them stupid; I cannot, if I would, call them ignorant; but how can I call them sincere? They know that, if the Home Rule Bill is passed into law, the cause of Disestablishment will be in



a minority in this House. They are going, I believe, to give to the right hon. Gentleman their strong and united support on the Irish Question; they are trying, at the same time, to pass a Bill which is to lead to the Disestablishment of the Church in Wales. And, Sir, how those two objects can be reconciled no Irish, no Scotch, no English intellect can possibly fathom, and only a Welsh intellect can put a common-sense interpretation upon the problem. For that reason I own I am content to believe in their insincerity. Does the House think that in taking this step which they are invited to take they will at some future time destroy the Welsh Church? Where does the House think Parties will be next year? I have no doubt hon. Gentlemen opposite will be confident; but can they be quite sure what Government will be in Office? If they are not quite sure, is it right from a Parliamentary point of view, is it right from a political point of view, or is it right from a moral point of view, to take the step which they now propose to take? How can any one anticipate what will be the verdict of the country with so much certainty that they can actually frame and call upon Parliament to assert a policy which, under certain circumstances, will be carried out in another Parliament? The verdict of the nation, you will agree, must be taken on another issue before this particular pledge which you are invited to give can be redeemed. I pass away from these large political grounds, and I ask you to admit that the situation of the Welsh Church may be one of very great embarrassment and misery. It has been well argued by my right hon. Friend the Member for Cambridge University (Sir John Gorst) that the Welsh parishes and benefices, and other higher places in the Church, may become vacant during the interval, which may be long or short, that may elapse between the passing of this Bill and your power to carry the Disestablishment of the Church. But I suppose it is said by the Home Secretary and other Members of his Party that it is very easy to fill the Welsh benefices and curacies and other offices in the Church. I do not know how you are going to fill them. I do not know how you are going to get incumbents for the

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vacant benefices. There are many curates in Wales who undoubtedly, under the system of Disestablishment, would be entitled to some compensation, and I do not think that even the moderate Liberal Party will altogether scout that proposition. You will not get curates to fill up these vacant benefices, because they would be entitled to some compensation if they lost their curacies, and no man in his senses, not even a Christian, would sacrifice his principles for worldly considerations of that kind. The House will admit it is impossible to say how long it will be before you can redeem that pledge or before the remedy can be applied. It would be impossible to say how many benefices might fall vacant, and what does that mean? It means that, so far as the Church in Wales is concerned, no marriages can take place, no burials can take place. [*Laughter.*] I cannot see why my reference to the non-ministration of these rites in any part of England should excite the merriment of hon. Members opposite, and all the ministrations of the Sacraments, according to the rites of the Church of England, would be absolutely arrested. If such cases should arise—and I see no precaution to prevent their arising—the result would resemble the proceedings of the Church of Rome in mediæval days, when it laid an interdict upon the country. These are arguments which you may choose not to answer in this House, but they are arguments which must be answered somewhere or other. It is much better that right hon. Gentlemen opposite should make their case in this House, where the public can follow their proceedings, than be too contemptuous to notice the objections. If it was necessary for the House to be very careful under the guidance of the First Lord of the Treasury in the case of the Disestablishment of the Irish Church, *a fortiori* the House of Commons must be careful in dealing with the case of Wales. I have shown that the two cases are by no means analogous. It is hardly denied—even the hon. Member for Montgomeryshire was obliged to admit with the utmost chagrin and displeasure that it is really hard to find—that the position of the Church in Wales is advancing, and that its power is growing stronger and stronger as the years roll by. In 1871

the First Lord of the Treasury distinctly inclined to the opinion that the Church at that time possessed a quarter of the population. No one who is in a position to judge will say that a quarter of the population, which might not have been inadequate in 1871, is not grossly inadequate to describe the state of the Church now. I will engage that the figures I put before the House as to the position of the Church in Wales are more in accordance with common-sense and human reason than are the statements with which Nonconformists overwhelm us. I say that in 1871 it was admitted that one-fourth of the Welsh people supported the Established Church. The increase made since then is on record in the statements of Mr. Gee, the editor of a newspaper the name of which I do not know how to pronounce—I think it is the *Baner*, although it does not mean banner, but means something else. Well, Sir, in the *Baner* some time ago, 18 months or two years ago, Mr. Gee, who is undoubtedly competent to speak of the Nonconformist position and strength, made a detailed estimate of the number of the Nonconformists in Wales, and he could not put it higher than 50 per cent. of the population. That is an authentic statement, and I challenge anybody to contradict it. In the face of that statement, and later we shall have to consider the composition of that 50 per cent., what becomes of the 600,000 people mentioned by the hon. Members for Montgomery and Denbigh as belonging to the Nonconformist churches? Will hon. Gentlemen get up in this House and deny the authority of Mr. Gee? I turn to another interesting and curious question which sounds a curious question, and I do not ask it disrespectfully. What is Wales? Is it a geographical expression, or is it a well-defined country inhabited by a separate race? [“Hear!”] Some hon. Gentlemen seem to think it is the latter designation. Then I have another question. What is the Established Church in Wales? I maintain that Wales is very difficult to define specially for any religious purpose. Wales is marked off from Great Britain by boundaries joined arbitrarily. The difference between the populations of England and Wales do not at all coincide. The English have migrated very largely across what I may call the Welsh

frontier, right into Wales. Along the whole Welsh borders there is a great fringe of English people who do not necessarily share the views of the Welsh people. It is a remarkable fact, and shows how right I am in my criticism of the valuelessness of the geographical boundaries, that Knighton, an important town in Radnorshire, is in the English Diocese of Hereford; Montgomery is also in the Diocese of Hereford; Breconshire, Pembrokeshire, Flintshire, and Denbighshire, are almost mainly inhabited by people of English extraction—[“No!”] No, Sir; what will you say to Monmouthshire, is that in Wales? But what I say is, that it is not possible to draw a line and say you will deal with Wales on the one side of the line and England on the other. It is so impossible to draw a line and say that the people on one side shall have an Established Church and the people on the other side shall not. That is a distinction which you cannot carry out on account of the mixture of the population, on account of the intermixture of motive, object, and idea which results. What does the right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury say now as to the unity of the English and Welsh Churches? That is another point on which the Home Secretary shows great ignorance. In 1871 the Prime Minister said, and he amplified and intensified it in 1891, only two years ago—

“There is really no Church in Wales; the Welsh Sees are simply four Sees held by Suffragans of the Province of Canterbury, and form part of the Province as much as any other four Sees in that Province.”

And in another portion of his speech he said, and I draw the Home Secretary's attention to this—

“There is complete ecclesiastical, constitutional, legal, and, for every practical purpose, historic identity between the Church of Wales and the rest of the Church in England.”

That being so, it is not untrue to say you cannot define Wales for the practical purposes of Establishment and Disestablishment, and it is also perfectly true to say there is no Church of Wales. That being so, Sir, the House of Commons being absolutely without information on those points—points which lay at the very root and meaning of the Established Church in Wales—I say it is impossible, unless the House of Commons is

going to follow mere Party prejudice and be guided by mere Party politics, for the House to pass a Suspensory Bill. In 1892 the right hon. Gentleman said in this House—

"You might speak with as much justice of the Church in Wales in England as the Church of England in Wales."

Could you have a stronger expression; and I ask, are you going to blame us and try to treat our arguments on this subject—on which, I think, the whole Tory Party agrees—with derision and contempt, when the sense and the merit and the scope of those arguments come from the speeches of your Leader and your own side? And do not Members for Wales see what position that lands the Tory Party in—that definition of the unity of the Church of England and the Church in Wales? Sir, of course we cannot stand by blind, like the ostrich; we must at once see that, if you disestablish in Wales what is portion of the Church of England, you may proceed to disestablish in other portions of the country other portions of the Church of England. Remember the statement of the present First Lord of the Treasury, that there is no difference between the Welsh Sees and any other four Sees in the Province of Canterbury, and if that is correct you may apply the same treatment to the one four Sees as you apply to the other; and can you be surprised that we are on our guard when a Suspensory Bill is proposed for the Welsh Church, and when we are not told what are the intentions of the Government with regard to the treatment of the Welsh Church? We are given no information by the Government as to how they look upon the Welsh Church, and we are left completely in the dark as to what use might be made if the Tory Party did not render a strenuous opposition to this proposal. We are not dealing to-night with the Church of Wales only; we are dealing with the Church of England. I would ask the House to consider what has not been alluded to at all, but what is a most important feature in Welsh society, which is affected greatly by the proposal of Disestablishment. Has the House considered the extraordinary progress and development of the English language in Wales? It has been stated

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in the *Nonconformist Year Book* that over 500,000 people require religious services in English. This paper states that the Nonconformists can only maintain their hold on the country through the English language; that a large proportion of the rising generation are being transformed into English-speaking people, and that, like the flow of the tide, the English language is advancing into the Principality. The main body of the Nonconformist section minister to the people in the native language, and it is a fact that only one-fifth of the present Welsh population habitually speak and use the Welsh language, so great has been the progress of the English language among them. So great has been the migration of English people into Wales, and so remarkable has been the effect of the dealings of the Church with the Welsh people, that Welsh is undoubtedly being superseded by the English language. How does that act upon the Nonconformists? Sir, the Nonconformists have made great efforts in Wales to start English chapels; they have made great efforts to supply English services required by more than 500,000 Welshmen. The result has been, so far as I can get any correct figure, that English communicants at Nonconformist chapels, where the services are performed in English, number 4 per 1,000. An Independent minister wrote the other day a letter to the newspapers in which he makes this curious statement: that his denomination was failing altogether to provide the necessary funds for conducting the services in English, and that of £700 a year which was collected towards English services in Wales over £400 of that sum was collected in England. That is a consideration which you cannot pass over in connection with a topic which I will dwell upon for a moment, which is the question of how the Nonconformists are going to provide for the spiritual needs of the country now supplied by the Welsh Church, if it is disestablished and disendowed? It is alleged as a sort of accusation and a sort of contention in Wales that it is a poor Church. So it is. I admit that; it is. But, Sir, is it a cause of reproach to a Church to be a poor Church? I never heard it treated in that way before. But, Sir, if it is a poor Church, what has that poor Church

done within the last 25 years or more? May I read to the House an extract from the *Quarterly Review* for January, 1890? [*Some cries of "Oh!"*] I daresay some gentlemen do not agree with the policy of that journal, but you must admit that the *Quarterly Review*, like the *Edinburgh Review*, is conducted with the greatest care, and any statements of fact they may make one may rely very confidently upon for their accuracy. Here is an article on the Church in Wales, and it alludes to the poverty of the Church in Wales. The writer says that it ought to have a double endowment instead of it being an impoverished Church. The writer goes on to say that what the Church in Wales had done was really marvellous. English services in her churches, he says, have increased by 100,000 in 35 years; that she has added to her staff 700 additional clergymen; expended on her buildings upwards of £2,500,000; increased the annual number of her candidates for confirmation by thousands, and that she educated in her schools 46 per cent. of the children under education. I think that is a tribute to the growing power of the Church. It is a proof that while her poverty and endowments might give you a cause to attack her, they are no cause of reproach to her. And are you sure, when speaking of the poverty of the Church in Wales, that the Nonconformist Body are better off? Does it lie in the mouth of the Nonconformist Bodies to call the Church of Wales a poor thing and a beggar? [*Some hon. MEMBERS: We do not.*] What is the debt on the Calvinistic Methodist chapels in Wales? That debt has been estimated as exceeding £300,000. But the Calvinistic Methodists are only one-third of the Nonconformists in Wales. There are the Baptist sects and the Independent sects which would outnumber the Calvinists by two-thirds to one-third, and there is no doubt there is a debt on the property of these three sects amounting to nearer £1,000,000 than £800,000. I do not think that with that tremendous debt it is in the power of the Nonconformists to reproach the Established Church in Wales with poverty. [*Some hon. MEMBERS: We do not.*] Notwithstanding the poverty of the Church in Wales she has made marvellous efforts

and accomplished marvellous results. The question I would like to ask is this—and it is a question which may fairly be considered: Are you sure that if you disestablish and disendow the Church in Wales the Nonconformists can properly provide for the religious requirements of Wales without the aid of the Established Church, when that Established Church is left in a state of utter ruin? Are you certain about that question, because surely it is a question you ought to be certain about before you proceed to this tremendous change. This is certain: that Nonconformist ministers do little of what is called pastoral work. The Nonconformist ministers are preaching ministers. All the good they accomplish—and that good is undoubted—is done by preaching. There is, on the other hand, a work which the Church of Wales does and which the Nonconformists do not do—and that is pastoral work. A learned divine, speaking on this subject in 1891, said—

“I have already told you that last year in nearly half the parishes of this diocese there was not a single resident Nonconformist minister; therefore this work of education, with its care for the young, its systematic visitation of all classes alike, especially the sick and poor, with its solicitude for those whom others pass by as hopeless or indifferent, is left entirely to the Church. Without the settled ministry provided by the parochial system of the Church some of the rural parishes would be in danger of relapsing into Paganism.”

The same divine says in another quotation—

“It is a truism which every parish priest in Wales will confirm, that in hours of trial and distress it is to the clergymen that the poor, be they Church or Nonconformist, always turn.”

MR. S. T. EVANS (Glamorgan, Mid): Will the noble Lord tell us who the divine was?

LORD RANDOLPH CHURCHILL: Yes; it is the favourite friend of hon. Gentlemen opposite, the Bishop of St. Asaph, a Prelate who is, perhaps, as highly respected as any other Prelate; and although he may not carry much weight with hon. Gentlemen opposite, I can assure them he is a Prelate who will carry a large amount of weight with the great body of public opinion in England, which hon. Members opposite will be

very foolish altogether to despise. I pass on to ask the House to consider a very curious fact. The Nonconformists are very vicious and spiteful against State endowments and against the parties who have benefited by these endowments. But they are not above taking advantage of State endowments themselves. In the early part of the century a portion of the Presbyterians adopted the doctrine of the Unitarian Church, and by so doing they were held by law to have forfeited the trust property which they held, consisting of chapels and other buildings connected therewith which had been bequeathed in trust for the dissemination of the Presbyterian doctrine. A decision was given taking away the property from the Unitarians. In 1844 Sir Robert Peel, a Tory Minister, was in power, supported by a Tory majority. I do not know whether the right hon. Gentleman was his colleague then—[Mr. GLADSTONE was understood to say he was]—but the action of the Tory Party at that time was certainly most generous and most liberal. They turned a ready ear to the demands that came before them, and they passed an Act securing to the Unitarians the possession of these chapels which had been forfeited by a breach of trust, and decided to be forfeited by Courts of Law. Thus a Tory majority and a Tory Government settled them absolutely on the Nonconformists in Wales, and the Nonconformists accepted what I say was practically a State endowment with the utmost gratitude. I feel I cannot longer detain the House, though there is much I should like to bring before it, but this must keep for a future occasion. It is very difficult to decide what motive can have led the right hon. Gentleman and his colleagues to propose this measure to the House after the position which the right hon. Gentleman had taken up on the question of Welsh Disestablishment, and in the absence of any proof that any circumstances have occurred, except one, to alter this opinion. Sir, I admit one circumstance has occurred, but it is totally inadequate to recommend the House to agree to the change which the right hon. Gentleman proposes. He has changed, Sir, and why? Because he said in his speech in 1892 that a majority of the Welsh Re-

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presentatives desired the Disestablishment of the Church in Wales. So they have, I think, for many years—the majority of them; but it was not till 1892 that the right hon. Gentleman admitted the validity of the mere force of numbers in such a question as the connection between Church and State. Sir, there is no doubt about it the motive of the Government is this: it is not what my hon. Friend the Member for Hertford said in his most interesting and telling speech; it is not what is called “plunder.” That is the local motive. The political motive is widely different. The object of introducing this Suspensory Bill to the House and pressing it on is undoubtedly to secure votes for their Irish policy. For the Irish policy of the Government the right hon. Gentleman and his colleagues are prepared to sacrifice anything, to abandon all former opinions, and to violate all former pledges. Sir, to carry that Irish policy nothing must be spared; never such a trifle as the Established Church in Wales! Votes! Votes! Votes! That is the great cry of the right hon. Gentleman, and that is the political morality which he preaches. Votes at any cost; votes at any price: “*Hæc Janus summus ab imo Perdocet; hæc recinunt juvenes dictata senesque.*” Adhere to nothing which can cost you votes; refrain from nothing which can cost you votes, and the political salvation of the Liberal Party is accomplished. I see before me a distinguished group of right hon. Gentlemen, many of them as able and as calculated to administer Public Departments as there exist in this country. But do you call yourselves a Government? Whom do you govern? One day the Government are at the mercy of the Irish Party, another day at the mercy of the Welsh Party, and on a third day, yet to come, they will be in the power of the Scotch Party. Sir, this Government, for the first time, I think, in the history of English Governments, is absolutely in the power of any three sections of its majority. It must concede when any section makes a demand that it is determined to enforce. The Welsh Party are now coercing the Government. We have not been perfectly unobservant of the meetings of the Welsh Party and of the negotiations which passed between that

Party and Her Majesty's Government, and I venture to say that we are not ignorant of the *ultimatum* the Welsh Party gave. English government has never yet been conducted on such principles. The English people, when they understand the principles upon which the right hon. Gentleman is now conducting the Business of Parliament and managing all the great interests of the country, I am certain will never consent that that Government should be carried on upon principles more suited to a Whitechapel auction than to the conduct of a State. I think it must be our duty—and the House will perceive it is our duty—it is the duty of the Tory Party while resisting in this House foot by foot, inch by inch, this Suspensory Bill; it is incumbent on the Tories to explain and make clear to the English people the iniquitous nature of the resources which the Liberal Party now resort to to carry out their politically infamous aims.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. W. E. GLADSTONE, Edinburgh, Midlothian): Mr. Speaker, the noble Lord has certainly put heart into this Debate, which in an earlier part of the evening, under the guidance of the right hon. Member for the University of Cambridge (Sir J. Gorst), it very much wanted. He has converted his argument on the Suspensory Bill into a general attack upon the Government. This Government, which has been in contact with Parliament for three weeks or a little more, the noble Lord is already able to bring to the bar of his impartial judgment. He says that they have developed a system of policy the most scandalous ever known in this country. The noble Lord has taken the best of all precautions—the precaution of the clock—[*Cries of "Order!" and "Adjourn!"*] Gentlemen who appear to have come recently into the House are still further abridging the modest half-hour in which I have to answer a speech three or four times as long.

LORD R. CHURCHILL: I beg pardon; I did not rise till after a quarter-past 10. [An hon. MEMBER: 10.20.]

MR. W. E. GLADSTONE: It is impossible for me to traverse the wide

field of the speech of the noble Lord, but this I will do; I will accept the challenge of the noble Lord, and I will say that the arts and resources of the present Government consists in this—in bringing forward while in Office measures which they approved in Opposition, in endeavouring to redeem the pledges which they have given to the country; and while the noble Lord tries to play Welsh Disestablishment against Irish Home Rule, and Irish Home Rule against Welsh Disestablishment, I tell him plainly that I am not ashamed either of the one or of the other proposition, and I am quite prepared to adopt his monosyllabic exclamation and to say Vote! vote! vote! Vote both for Welsh Disestablishment and for Home Rule. Now, Sir, while listening to the noble Lord's instructive references to Welsh history and circumstances, I must confess I had a great desire to reply to them in detail, because they appear to me to have been derived from some authority bearing an aspect very different from that of an original knowledge. There is one to which I will refer, because there the noble Lord might have acquired an original knowledge. He says that in 1844 a Tory majority passed a most liberal Bill to secure to Unitarians their endowments. The noble Lord is totally mistaken. The Tory Government which was at that time of a very liberal character as to its measures—[An hon. MEMBER: "Oh, oh!"]—Is the hon. Gentleman who jeers unaware that it was at that time that Mr. Disraeli began his famous attacks on Sir Robert Peel? The Tory majority which had seriously impaired its command over its followers by its measures did introduce that liberal Bill. That liberal Bill was supported by the whole Liberal Party in the House of Commons, and was opposed by a powerful minority of Conservatives. Such, Sir, is the historical accuracy of the noble Lord. If he is not the mere tool of somebody who has supplied him with a parcel of what he calls facts, he might, by the simple process of reference to *Hansard*, have placed his feet upon sure ground. The noble Lord talks much about the difficulty of finding a frontier for Wales. He thinks it is impossible to have separate legislation for Wales. Impossible! Why, we have already begun that separate legislation.

We have had Welsh Sunday Closing and Intermediate Education Bills.

LORD R. CHURCHILL: Exclusive.

MR. W. E. GLADSTONE: In this case it so happens that the frontier for which we have to legislate is just as definite—down to the minutest inch of territory—as it would be if we were legislating for any diocese throughout England. What we propose to do is to legislate for the four Welsh dioceses, and their frontier is defined, and the jurisdiction within them is defined, with the same rigour as is the case elsewhere. He says we are going to treat the Welsh Church with extreme severity—with much greater severity than the Church of Ireland. Let us pass judgment by examination upon the justice of his imputations. He refers to the Irish Suspensory Bill of 1868. To bring that into comparison with the present Suspensory Bill I will point out the differences: The Irish Suspensory Bill, which the noble Lord says was so humane, actually put a stop to appointments to vacancies in Ireland. It destroyed the machinery of the Church for making use of the public means and carrying on its work as an Establishment when a vacancy occurred. Is that the case here? Is there any putting a stop to any appointment whatever? There is nothing of the kind; and there is not a single act that would be done under Ecclesiastical Law in the maintenance of the operations of the Welsh Church which might not go on just as legally and just as fully after this Bill has passed as now before it has become law. The noble Lord apparently believes—such is his acquaintance with ecclesiastical matters on which he has undertaken to speak—that when a benefice falls vacant in this country the services are to be put a stop to, the Sacraments are not to be administered, and the rites of the Church are to cease to be known. Why, in every vacant benefice in this country it is the duty of persons properly appointed, and so it would be under this Suspensory Bill, to make provision for the conduct of these services. Let the House understand what the object of this Bill is. It has a very limited object.

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It is simply to prevent the growth of new vested interests, and in every other respect to leave the machinery and the action of the Church as free and as effective as they are now. How has the Bill been met? The official Representative of the Opposition, the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Cambridge University, met it with an elaborate argument, and what was the summit of the claim that the right hon. Gentleman set up for the Church in Wales? It was this: that it was capable of being made useful to the Welsh people! Was there ever a defence offered by a skilled advocate so fraught with the most fatal imputations?

SIR JOHN GORST: I said it was useful and that it was capable of being made useful. I said both.

MR. W. E. GLADSTONE: The right hon. Gentleman said it was useful. He may have said it was useful to its members, but as to the Welsh people what he said was that it was capable of being made useful, just the same as if the right hon. Gentleman, speaking of this House as a great Institution of the country, had said it was capable of being made useful to the people of England. Now, there is no doubt at all that a very large proportion of the Welsh people are out of relation to the Established Church of that country. It is idle to talk on this question about a census. The Nonconformists may be right or they may be wrong to resist a census, but there is no question about the matter in Wales. A very large majority of the people are beyond all question out of communion with the Church. The 50 per cent. to whom the noble Lord has referred is not a representation signifying that the other 50 per cent. are in the Church.

LORD R. CHURCHILL: I did not say it was.

MR. W. E. GLADSTONE: It is a statement that 50 per cent. of the people can be accounted for as Church members and Church-goers among the Nonconformists, that a smaller proportion is in the Established Church, and that there is a margin even in

Wales that cannot be accounted for in connection with either one Body or the other. As regards the speech of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for the University of Cambridge, I cannot say that it was pervaded by any political spirit. It was an able argument, quite devoid of all Party complexion ; neither was it in any degree tainted with religious or ecclesiastical animosity. It was a most temperate defence of the Establishment ; so temperate was it that it was cool, and so cool that it was cold. The right hon. Gentleman seemed to think that there was a novel situation which required him to assume a new individuality, and his speech was like a suit of clothes which is new, which hangs loosely about the wearer, not having yet acquired a perfect fit. When listening to the speech of the right hon. Gentleman I bethought myself of the fact that in our great sea-going ships there is always an apartment known as an ice-chamber, and I could not help wondering whether his speech had not been composed in an ice-chamber. He argued that the Church in Wales was capable of being made useful to the Welsh. I quite agree with him. I quite admit that the Church of England in those four dioceses makes great exertions, and progress in consequence of those exertions. That is what the Nonconformists have been doing for several generations. The Church has entered into competition with them. That competition is going on. There are various Bodies doing good work, and the Established Church is exerting herself in doing it with the Nonconformists by her side. Why is the Established Church to be supplied by the State with funds to carry on that work and the Nonconformists to be left to their own modest resources ? The noble Lord, with his second-hand information, tells us that the Nonconformists in Wales have reproached the Established Church with her poverty. I know something of Wales. I have been connected with it for more than 50 years, and I never heard anything so absurd proceeding from the mouth of a person in the noble Lord's position. Though it is true that there are parts of Wales where the Church is poor, yet in a very large portion of Wales she is endowed quite as amply as the Church is

in rural portions of this country. In the diocese of St. Asaph, for instance, the Church is rather rich than a poor Church, and with regard to that the noble Lord is as totally ignorant as he is, indeed, upon the whole case. Now, I want to deal with the effect of the Suspensory Bill. It is not denied that the Church in Wales will be left in possession of her temporalities for the purpose of prosecuting her work. But it is said that the Bill deals with parishes which fall vacant. The noble Lord says, "You will never get a curate to accept a parish which falls vacant, because he will not get a vested interest." But is it not a fact that a great many professions are carried on without vested interests ? The Nonconformist chapels are filled by men content to rely upon their own talents and their own exertions, and, humble as they are, upon their own resources, and there should be no difficulty in finding ministers to give satisfaction to the congregations who have for a number of years done a great part of the work of a Church in Wales. There are many learned professions — the medical profession is a case in point — carried on almost entirely without the support of anything that can be called a vested interest. Large numbers of churches themselves, in Wales and elsewhere, have no vested interest whatever. The minister takes his position on the faith of the congregation, and relies on his own judgment and exertions. I believe that is the universal custom. But what is to be the amount of disadvantage to which the Church is to be exposed by this Bill ? The noble Lord says that if there is Disestablishment the Church in Wales and its organisation will vanish, and will leave the Nonconformists to complete a work for which they would not be strong enough. There is this to be said ; that if the Established Church were to vanish, all that the Nonconformists of Wales would have to do would be to complete a work which they have already largely achieved, and of which they have accomplished the most difficult part. That work is dealing with the poor and providing for those who are destitute of spiritual instruction. I say that the vast bulk of that work has been accomplished for years past by the aid of the Non-



conformists. The noble Lord said that if a benefice fell vacant a curate would not accept it if this Bill were passed. I think I know something more of Welsh curates than he does, and believe there would be scores of curates who would be delighted to accept it. Now, the noble Lord quoted from a speech I made about 1868, I think, with regard to the way in which we ought to proceed then in the matter of Disestablishment. I accept every word, every syllable of that passage. Nothing, however, can be more improbable, I might say impossible, than that I shall ever be concerned in such a work. However, the noble Lord, I admit, made one good point in his speech, and that was the allusion to the time of life at which I have arrived.

LORD R. CHURCHILL: No, no.

MR. W. E. GLADSTONE: The noble Lord said "*senesque*," and pointed to me. Yes; and I thought it was the best point in the whole of the speech. The only case that can be put is this: There might be an instance where there is a gentleman in possession of a benefice of £300 with a vested interest. It might be desirable to remove him to a vacancy worth £500, and he might not like to run the risk of the translation. That is the whole objection; he might not care for the change. Does the noble Lord not see that that is a very small question, and one which is open to discussion in Committee—that is, whether we should not try by this Bill to keep alive old vested interests? The purpose of the Bill is not to dispose of old vested interests, but to prevent the creation of new vested interests, which constitute a very heavy burden on the people. The noble Lord says he has listened in vain for arguments in support of the Bill, which he calls a Bill for the Disestablishment of the Welsh Church.

MR. KENYON: And Disendowment.

MR. W. E. GLADSTONE: I make this confession, to which I think the noble Lord is entitled, and that is that this Bill is a Disestablishing Bill in principle. I go further, and state that we cannot recommend hon. Gentlemen to

*Mr. W. E. Gladstone*

vote for this Suspensory Bill unless they think that the facts within their knowledge justify our undertaking the project of the Disestablishment of the Church.

MR. KENYON: Disendowment.

MR. W. E. GLADSTONE: Disestablishment of the Church demanded alike by policy and justice, although attended by not inconsiderable practical difficulties. The noble Lord said that I never recognised the voice of the Welsh people until 1892. I have an old Parliamentary habit which the noble Lord has not yet acquired—I do not mean it as a reproach—that of looking to the constitutional representation of a country as the proper and legitimate organ of the expression of public opinion. The declaration of the Welsh people for Disestablishment is comparatively recent. In 1871, when I made a speech quoted to-night by the noble Lord, only seven Welsh Members voted with Mr. Watkin Williams for Disestablishment, and 13 voted against it. Let the noble Lord show me a similar state of facts among the Welsh Members now, and I will re-consider my position. I do not want to force Disestablishment on those who do not want it. I am disposed to give it in answer to the reasonable, persistent, and unequivocal voice of the people, who are entitled to speak and judge for themselves, and who do speak and judge for themselves through the medium of their Constitutional Representatives. The noble Lord says that no argument has been advanced for Disestablishment. I will not say that there is an absolute argument, but there is a strong presumptive argument for Disestablishment wherever the adherents of Establishment are in a small minority. That argument is greatly enhanced and fortified when it also so happens that in the division of the classes of the community those who belong to the Establishment are the wealthier, and those who dissent are the poorer. Both these circumstances concur in the case of Wales. It may be said this is a momentary sentiment. No; it is not. It is a sentiment which year after year, and at election after election, has grown with a rapidity not less than its vigour, and has manifested itself through the most authoritative organs of

the people. I do not say that those two circumstances constitute an imperative call to Disestablishment in themselves. But I say that when those two circumstances concur, and are backed by the unequivocal declarations of the people of the Principality, through their Representatives in this House, that is an argument of enormous strength—and I do not understand how the noble Lord considers it is not. If the noble Lord has any room at all for popular principles in his creed—sometimes it has been supposed that his creed has been rather tainted with popular principles—he must admit the force of that argument. But the noble Lord says that the best points are to be made against us out of our own mouths. Then I will go in defence to the mouths of the great authorities on the side of our opponents. Does he remember the declaration of Lord Hartington? “The voice of the people adequately expressed ought to carry it.” Does he remember the declaration of Lord Derby in complete conformity with the declaration of Lord Hartington? How is he to tell us, when the Church is in a small minority, and that only of the rich, while the Nonconformists provide for the poor—when the people have taken the matter into their own hands, and have for some years indicated, by an approach to unanimity which is almost unexampled in our Parliamentary history, that they intend to have Disestablishment carried into effect; and when we crown this state of things by citing the highest authorities among our opponents—how, I ask, is it possible for the noble Lord to treat as insignificant and as not amounting to an argument a combination of circumstances which, as a political demonstration, imposes on the House the duty of looking for the first opportunity which the state of Business will permit to carry through the entire work of Disestablishment? Let us be permitted—I do not doubt we shall be permitted—to proceed to the judgment of this House on this mild and moderate Bill. We do not aim at interfering with the work of the Church; but in passing this measure we shall best prove our intention to go steadily and boldly forward towards the completion of the task which we have set before us.

VOL. IX. [FOURTH SERIES.]

Question put.

The House divided :—Ayes 301 ;  
Noes 245.—(Division List, No. 11.)

Main Question again proposed.

Mr. SPEAKER proceeded to interrupt the Business.

Mr. STUART RENDEL rose in his place, and claimed to move “That the Main Question be now put.”

Question put, “That the Main Question be now put.”

The House proceeded to a Division.

Mr. Kenyon was appointed a Teller for the Noes, but no Member being willing to act as the second Teller, Mr. SPEAKER declared that the Ayes had it.

Main Question put accordingly, and agreed to.

Bill ordered to be brought in by Mr. Secretary Asquith, Mr. Gladstone, Mr. Henry H. Fowler, and Mr. Thomas Ellis.

Bill presented, and read the first time. [Bill 225.]

SIR M. HICKS-BEACH : I would ask permission to make an explanation somewhat of a personal nature. When I rose it was with the intention of saying that, although several hon. Members on this side of the House, including myself, were extremely anxious to address the House on this question, yet I hoped that no further Debate would be taken before the First Reading of the Bill. My reason was entirely misinterpreted by the hon. Gentlemen below the Gangway, and, if I may say so, also by yourself, Mr. Speaker. I would only add this : that although it had been my intention to make that statement to the House, and although I am very glad that the House has agreed to the First Reading of the Bill, in order that its provisions may be before the country, yet we intend on this side of the House to insist to the utmost —[*Cries of “Oh !” and “Order !”*]

Mr. SPEAKER : It is scarcely in Order for the right hon. Gentleman to address the House, as there is no Question before it. In regard to the Closure

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Resolution, I am bound by the Standing Orders. When a Member rises, if the Motion is made, and it is not inopportune, I have no alternative but to put it.

MR. ASQUITH announced that the names on the back of the Bill were those of Mr. H. Fowler, Mr. Gladstone, Mr. T. Ellis, and himself.

MR. W. E. GLADSTONE said that the Second Reading would be taken on Thursday.

SIR M. HICKS-BEACH: I shall be in Order now. I think we have done our utmost to facilitate the Business of this House by assenting, without further debate, to the First Reading of this Bill to-night. We shall do our utmost—

MR. T. M. HEALY: I rise to a point of Order. I wish to ask whether, on the Question of the fixing of a day for a Bill, anything is in Order except the date?

MR. SPEAKER: No; nothing is in Order, except it be to show that the Bill ought to be taken at a later date than that proposed.

SIR M. HICKS-BEACH: We shall do our utmost to insist on full and ample notice being given of the Second Reading of this Bill, and on its being fixed at a time when the fullest Debate can be taken upon the measure, which in our opinion is fraught with danger to England as well as to Wales, and which has been carried only by the Irish vote.

MR. W. E. GLADSTONE: There was no occasion for the right hon. Gentleman to insist on having adequate notice and a convenient time. That will be freely granted without any insisting at all.

MR. KENYON: This matter being one of such urgency, we demand its immediate consideration by the House. I beg to urge, therefore, on the right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury that this Bill be proceeded with *de die in diem*.

#### REGIMENTAL DEBTS (CONSOLIDATION)

BILL.—(No. 116.)

Considered in Committee.

Committee report Progress; to sit again upon Monday next.

*Mr. Speaker*

#### JURORS' REMUNERATION BILL.

(No. 182.)

Considered in Committee.

Committee report Progress; to sit again upon Tuesday next.

#### NAVY ESTIMATES (1893-4).

Copy presented,—of Navy Estimates for the year 1893-4, with Explanatory Observations by the Financial Secretary and Explanation of Differences [by Command]; Referred to the Committee of Supply, and to be printed. [No. 85.]

#### NAVY (STATEMENT EXPLANATORY OF ESTIMATES).

Copy presented,—of Statement of First Lord of the Admiralty, explanatory of Navy Estimates, 1893-4 [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

#### CIVIL SERVICES AND REVENUE DEPARTMENTS, 1893-4.

##### MEMORANDUM ON ESTIMATES.

Copy presented,—of Memorandum of the Financial Secretary to the Treasury relating to the Civil Service Estimates, 1893-4 [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

#### ARMY (SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATE, 1892-3).

Copy presented,—of Estimate of the Further Amount that will be required during the year ending 31st March 1893, to meet Additional Expenditure for the Pay, &c. of the Army [by Command]; Referred to the Committee of Supply, and to be printed. [No. 87.]

#### ARMY ESTIMATES, 1893-4.

Copy presented,—of Army Estimates of Effective and Non-effective Services for 1893-4, with Statement showing the variation of the Numbers of Her Majesty's British Forces, the Amounts included for the Colonies and Egypt, and the Sums provided for each Arm of the Service and for various Miscellaneous Establishments [by Command]; Referred to the Committee of Supply, and to be printed. [No. 88.]

House adjourned at half after Twelve o'clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Friday, 24th February 1893.

TRADE UNION PROVIDENT FUNDS BILL.

Brought from the Commons; read 1<sup>a</sup>; to be printed; and to be read 2<sup>a</sup> on Thursday next.—(*The Lord Chancellor.*) (No. 21.)

House adjourned at half past Four o'clock, to Monday next, a quarter before Eleven o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Friday, 24th February 1893.

PRIVATE BUSINESS.

LONDON COUNTY COUNCIL (GENERAL POWERS) BILL (*by Order*).

SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."

\*MR. BARTLEY (Islington, N.): I do not wish to oppose the Second Reading of this Bill, but there are one or two points in it which I think require serious attention. First, there is Clause 15, which gives power to the County Council to spend money on investigations and negotiations—

"to obtain such advice and assistance to make such investigations and to carry on such negotiations on any subject as they may consider desirable in the public interest."

I think these are large powers. It is true the County Council have issued a statement in which they endeavour to minimise these powers, stating their intention is only to spend sums of limited amount on inquiries in relation to certain specified subjects. If these words were in the Bill itself, I would have nothing to say against it; and I hope the matter will be attended to by the Committee upstairs. There is another matter of considerable importance. Clause 19 of

the Bill gives power of a very drastic nature to the County Council to re-arrange the wards in different parts of London. It says—

"The Council may from time to time upon the application in writing of the Vestry, or of not less than 500 rated householders of a parish within the County of London by order under their seal, re-arrange the wards in such parish, and determine the number, extent, limits, and boundary lines of such new wards."

That is a strong power to give the County Council over the heads of the Vestries on the requisition of 500 ratepayers. Five hundred may seem a large number, but in the parish of Islington, which I represent, we have 40,000 houses and a population of 350,000 persons; so that after all 500 is a very small portion of the residents to have the power of inducing or moving the London County Council to re-arrange the wards, even against the wishes of the Vestry, which is elected by a representative body of the ratepayers. It is quite true that there is an appeal to the Secretary of State; but that is a very cumbersome procedure, and I think there should be some restrictions inserted in the clause which would prevent a small portion of the residents of a district from over-riding the wishes of the Vestry.

\*MR. T. H. BOLTON (St. Pancras, N.) said, that with reference to Clause 21, dealing with sky signs, street advertisements and hoardings, it seemed that the County Council had not yet made up their mind as to the nature or the scope of the clause, and that being so he thought that persons affected by the clause, such as street advertisers, should have the opportunity of giving their views to the Committee. If, as he understood, the time for presenting Petitions had expired, he thought these people should have the opportunity of attending before the Committee and have their interests represented.

\*SIR JOHN LUBBOCK (London University): I can assure the hon. Member (Mr. Bartley) that the London County Council are not desirous to spend unreasonable sums of money in obtaining the information they require. But when proposals are made a careful inquiry is often necessary in the interests of economy, and we desire to be ready for such emergencies. As to his other point,

we think there must be some ultimate authority as to the re-arrangement of the wards. We think our proposal is a very reasonable mode of dealing with the subject. We desire to co-operate with the Vestries in the matter, and it is very improbable that we should endeavour to force the Vestries into a re-arrangement of the wards against their wishes. To guard against any arbitrary re-arrangement, we make it subject to an appeal to the Local Government Board, but the County Council will have pleasure in meeting any objection on that point that may be raised. As regards the request of the hon. Member for North St. Pancras (Mr. T. H. Bolton), the Council have taken no steps to shut out Petitions. We should not object to Petitions being referred to the Committee. I hope, under these circumstances, the House will consent to the Second Reading of the Bill.

\*COLONEL HUGHES (Woolwich) said, he thought the London County Council should not be entrusted with arbitrary power to sub-divide the wards as the population increased. With regard to inquiries, and the amount of money that might be spent on inquiries, he thought the County Council would have power under the Bill, if it passed without amendment, to make inquiries anywhere—in Berlin, or in any other part of the world; and in the interest of all the ratepayers of London at large some strict definition should be given to the words and limitation of expense in order to prevent the County Council from going beyond their statutory powers.

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a second time, and committed to a Select Committee of Nine Members, Five to be nominated by the House and Four by the Committee of Selection.

SIR A. BORTHWICK (Kensington, S.) moved—

"That all Petitions against the Bill presented in conformity with the Standing Orders be referred to the Committee; that the Petitioners praying to be heard by themselves, their Counsel, or Agents, be heard against the Bill, and Counsel heard in support of the Bill."

My desire that this Bill should go to a larger Committee than a Select Committee is entirely based upon a consideration of the principles involved in it, and not upon any wish to oppose the general measures of the County Council. The

County Council is a very large and important body, which has in many respects done its work well, and I am certain that the wish of the House of Commons and the public generally is to encourage it in doing its work as efficiently as possible. From time to time, however, the Council comes to Parliament for further powers, and my complaint against it is that, instead of asking definitely for what it absolutely requires, it is too apt to open its mouth too wide and ask for powers which hardly ought to be conceded to it. In this very Bill it asks for powers to raise any amount of money for any investigation without laying down any specific definition whatever. In another clause it proposes—I do not use the term at all offensively—to invade the Thames Conservancy, which is a very old body and thoroughly well administered. The County Council now ask for a sudden and large representation upon that body, but while the Thames flows for 20 miles of its course through the territory of the London County Council, there are many more miles where the County Council cannot possibly claim to have any authority over the river. I am not contesting the point as to whether or not the County Council ought to be represented upon the Thames Conservancy, but I must point out that the Council are putting forward a sudden and large requirement without any apparent justification. The Council seek power to build a bridge, and also to establish a large ferry, across the river, in both of which cases they ignore the existence of the Conservancy altogether. The subject of sky signs has been alluded to, and it is very difficult to arrive at an exact definition of what constitutes a sky sign; but here again the County Council take power to interfere with all mural advertisements, and insert a clause in their Bill which I am sure will certainly be excised in many of its details by any Committee before which it may come. The Bill likewise deals with the question of music. The Council has already spent £4,000 a year for bands in open spaces, and under this Bill, instead of getting an estimate from the Vestries or District Boards as to what particular bands they require, they take power to ask for any amount of money, and to provide any quantity of music anywhere. This may give rise to suspicions, because there is a proposal on

*Sir John Lubbock*

the part of the County Council to take over the Albert Hall, and we may have the County Council plunging into speculative entertainments at the Albert Hall. I may be told the ratepayers would object to that, but I am not so certain upon the point. The ratepayers are very long-suffering, and many of them are very full of the wish for entertainment. It is certainly evident that such a large power of providing amusement in competition with other amusements might lead to very considerable abuse. I am not alluding to the matter in any carping spirit, but I think a case has been made out for the reference of the Bill to such a Committee as I now propose.

MR. W. F. D. SMITH (Strand, Westminster) seconded the Motion.

Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That all Petitions against the Bill presented in conformity with the Standing Orders be referred to the Committee; that the Petitioners praying to be heard by themselves, their Counsel, or Agents, be heard against the Bill, and Counsel heard in support of the Bill."—(*Sir Algernon Borthwick.*)

\*SIR JOHN LUBBOCK: I quite agree with the hon. Baronet when he says that he has not moved this Motion in any carping spirit, but it appears to me that he has done so under a misapprehension of the facts. Take the question of music, for instance. He said we are asking for powers to spend additional sums of money in providing music for the people. That is not so. At present we have powers to spend any money we please on bands in the parks, but we have no power to place a band in any of the open spaces which are under the control of the Vestries. The people who live near those open spaces in different parts of London very properly think that they should share in the pleasure of the bands as well as people who live near the parks, but we are precluded from carrying out their very natural wish, because these open spaces are not under the control of the County Council, but under the control of the Vestries. As to the point about the amount of money to be spent on inquiries, I have already replied to that. I can assure my hon. Friend that we are not desirous to undertake any inquiries which may end in wasting the ratepayers' money; but we think that when we have entered

on an inquiry which we see will be of advantage to the ratepayers, we should not be precluded from carrying it to a successful issue because of the insufficiency of our powers. The hon. Baronet seems to think that our proposal in respect to the representation of the County Council on the Thames Conservancy Board is a new and subtle proposal; but really we are only carrying out a recommendation of a Committee of this House. When we made a similar proposal in 1890 it was referred to the Committee upstairs, and they gave us a representation on the Conservancy of the Lea, which was agreed to by the Lords and is now law. The Committee also gave us a representation of five Members on the Thames Board, but when the Bill came down to this House again the question was raised that as it was undesirable to deal with the question of the Thames Conservancy as a whole, it was, under the circumstances, undesirable at that moment to make any change in the constitution in the Thames Conservancy Board. We think we should have some voice in the control of the great river which flows through London, and I hope the House will think that that is only fair. At any rate, the whole question might be considered if the Bill goes to a Committee. As regards the County Council, we have no objection to the Motion of the hon. Baronet, with a certain Amendment which will be moved later on by the hon. Member for Hoxton Division of Shoreditch (Mr. James Stuart). Speaking, however, as a Member of this House, I am not sure that this Motion is desirable; it seems to me that an ordinary Committee would be quite sufficient, but if the House thinks that a Hybrid Committee is desirable, so far as the County Council is concerned we have no objection to offer.

\*MR. T. H. BOLTON said, the Amendment he wished to move to the second paragraph of the Motion was in order that certain people who are affected by the clauses in this Bill and who have not presented Petitions because they do not really know what the County Council intend to do—even the County Council themselves have not made up their minds as to the scope of the clauses—should have an opportunity of petitioning. He now proposed that that should be effected by this Amendment to the second paragraph of

the Motion : After the word "presented" in the first line to omit the words "in conformity with the Standing Orders," and insert "within five days from the Second Reading," so that the clause would read, "that all Petitions against the Bill presented within five days from the Second Reading be referred to the Committee."

Amendment proposed,

To leave out the words "in conformity with the Standing Orders," and insert the words "within five days from the Second Reading."—(*Mr. Thomas Henry Bolton.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question."

\*COLONEL HUGHES (Woolwich) observed that such an Amendment would exclude the Petitions that had already been lodged.

MR. T. H. BOLTON intimated that he should be willing to include the words "and already presented," so that Petitions already lodged should not be excluded.

\*MR. SPEAKER : I would suggest that the words should be "within one week of the meeting of the Committee." I do not know whether the hon. Member will accept that.

MR. T. H. BOLTON thought that if the Committee were to meet within a week from the present time that would shut out Petitions. However, he was in the hands of the Chair.

\*MR. SPEAKER : The Committee cannot meet until this day week.

MR. T. H. BOLTON : If that is so, I will accept the suggestion.

\*MR. SPEAKER : If the hon. Member will accept the words "within seven days of the meeting of the Committee," I will put it to the House—that the words proposed to be left out be omitted for the purpose of inserting the words "within seven days of the meeting of the Committee."

Amendment put, and negatived.

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Words "not later than six clear days before the meeting of the Committee" there inserted.—(*Mr. Thomas Henry Bolton.*)

*Mr. T. H. Bolton*

\*SIR JOHN LUBBOCK : I think the Amendment my hon. Friend is now moving goes a good deal beyond his first suggestion. What I said was that the Committee would no doubt receive the Petitions, and certainly there was no desire to exclude anyone interested. To that I still adhere, but I think it would be a dangerous thing to depart from the rules of the House, to allow further Petitions to be handed in, and the petitioners heard by counsel.

\*MR. T. H. BOLTON : I cannot see what objection there should be to allowing any persons affected by this clause to have their views represented. We have been told that the County Council themselves have not yet made up their minds what this clause is to be, and yet these people are to be shut out from having their views represented by counsel before the Committee ! I am surprised that the right hon. Baronet has raised any objection to the course I have suggested.

\*MR. SPEAKER : I hardly like to make another suggestion, but I think it would be better if the notice were "not later than six clear days before the meeting of the Committee."

MR. COURTNEY (Cornwall, Bodmin) : Allow me to point out that it does not matter what Petitions are referred to the Committee ; but what Petitions are allowed to be heard, and it is upon the next point that Debate may arise. On this point I think my right hon. Friend might allow Petitions to be presented up till within six days of the meeting of the Committee.

SIR JOHN LUBBOCK : I agree to that.

Amendment agreed to.

MR. JAMES STUART (Shoreditch, Hoxton) then moved, in reference to the words "the Petitioners praying to be heard by themselves, their Counsel," &c., that the words "the Petitioners" be omitted, and the following words inserted in their place: "such Petitioners as would otherwise have a *locus standi*." If such an Amendment were not adopted, the Bill would be thrown open to any amount of Petitions to be heard by counsel, and persons who had no *locus standi* under ordinary circumstances might apply that their Petitions be presented and considered by the Committee.

The Committee might take the question under their consideration, and considerable expense might be thrown upon the City.

Amendment proposed,

To leave out the words "the Petitioners," and insert the words "such Petitioners as would otherwise have a *locus standi*."—(*Mr. James Stuart.*)

\*MR. T. H. BOLTON: The words "otherwise have a *locus standi*," taken in connection with the alteration made in the first paragraph, might confine the petitioners to those people who have already presented Petitions. That is not what is intended; and with reference to the suggestion that the altered clause, taken in conjunction with the alteration made by my Motion, would let in all sorts of people to petition, and would let in a number of Petitions that would not come in under the Standing Order, that is not a good objection. The provisions of this Bill are so very exceptional in many of their aspects that it would be unfair to important interests to lay down a hard and fast rule, made to apply to ordinary cases, but not to extraordinary cases such as this. There is a good deal in this Bill besides what appears on the face of it. This sky-sign clause unquestionably may very seriously affect a very important and useful trade, and I am not at all sure that that trade, as a body, could present a Petition with reference to this particular clause under the Standing Orders of the House. That being so, if the Amendment which my hon. Friend now proposes be carried, the result might be to shut out that important trade; and there are other interests affected by this Bill which, by any hard and fast rule confining the Petitions within highly technical rules, would shut out important interests that have a right to be heard on a measure of this kind. I am not desirous of throwing any difficulties in the way. I only wish, in regard to this Bill—which the County Council themselves admit is confessedly imperfect and ought to be supplemented by corrections in many places—that it should be open to Public Bodies and persons prejudicially affected by it to have an opportunity of presenting Petitions upon it and of being heard by the Committee. As to the question of expense, I may point out that no person would petition Parliament,

and bring witnesses before the Committee at considerable expense unless he has some serious case. Under these circumstances, I object to the Amendment, and I trust the House will not assent to it.

\*SIR JOHN LUBBOCK: My hon. Friend says he wishes that these important interests he represented should have an opportunity of appearing before the Committee. But these interests have had the usual opportunity. They have had the full and ordinary notice that the Bill was going forward and of petitioning in time if they chose to do so. My hon. Friend said that I admitted on behalf of the County Council that this Bill was imperfect and must be modified. What I really did say, as representing the County Council, was that with the permission of the House we should not object to send the Bill to this Committee, and that the Committee would carefully inquire into the clauses. We have made up our minds on these clauses before this, and we desire to carry them if we can, but we are ready to consider any suggestions in a fair spirit. My hon. Friend asked me if we were prepared to agree that the Committee should consider these clauses, and I said we would gladly do so, but that is a very different thing to allowing Petitions not yet presented to be brought forward in this unusual manner. I am surprised to hear the hon. Member say that such a matter would not involve expense. We hope the House of Commons will agree to the Amendment of my hon. Friend, which seems very reasonable. We have even stretched a point beyond what we were asked for—we have agreed that those persons not represented by Petitions should still have a right to petition, and those Petitions may go to the Committee upstairs and be considered. Under these circumstances, I submit we have already gone beyond what is usual in these cases; we have never admitted that there is anything in the Bill which we do not approve, all that we have said being that we shall be happy to consider the evidence and representation that may be made to the Committee upstairs. I hope, under these circumstances, that the House will support us in our endeavour to oppose being put to unnecessary and unusual expense in this matter.



Question put, "That the words 'the Petitioners' stand part of the Question."

The House divided:—Ayes 98; Noes 229.—(Division List, No. 12.)

Words inserted.

Main Question, as amended, put, and agreed to.

Ordered, That all Petitions against the Bill presented not later than six clear days before the meeting of the Committee be referred to the Committee, that such Petitioners as would otherwise have a *locus standi*, praying to be heard by themselves, their Counsel, or Agents, be heard against the Bill, and Counsel heard in support of the Bill.

Ordered, That the Committee have power to send for persons, papers, and records.

Ordered, That Five be the quorum.—(Sir Algernon Borthwick.)

#### MIDDLESEX COUNTY COUNCIL BILL.

(by Order).

##### SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

\*MR. HOWARD (Middlesex, Tottenham): I rise to move the Second Reading of the Middlesex County Council Bill, which is promoted by the Middlesex County Council, and seeks to acquire additional powers for that Body. The first two clauses are simply clauses to remove the inconvenience which Middlesex suffers as against other counties which have not the same position of affairs to contend with. I do not think these two clauses contain any contentious matter. As to the 3rd clause there is no doubt it is somewhat more contentious, but the object of it is simply to overcome schemes promoted by outside authorities, and which reduce or destroy the rateable value of property in Middlesex. Middlesex has been a great sufferer in this respect, and the rateable value of property has been thereby considerably reduced. This is especially the case in my own division, that of Tottenham. Only during the last year an infectious hospital has been placed amongst us. Now, Sir, I venture to submit it is a travesty of Local Government if outside authorities are to come in and over-ride every Local Authority in the district. What we ask by this Bill is simply to give power to the Middlesex County Council to say whether or not an outside authority should come in in this manner, and I

think that the House will feel that we are right in coming here to protect a county like Middlesex from having a London Infectious Hospital planted in our midst without our being able to say a word in our own defence. I therefore beg to move the Second Reading.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."—(Mr. Howard.)

MR. PICKERSGILL (Bethnal Green, S.W.): I rise to move the rejection of this Bill. As my hon. Friend has said, it is a Bill promoted by the Middlesex County Council, and it applies to, or rather, I should say, it is directed, against all Local Authorities having jurisdiction, wholly or partially, outside that county from coming into Middlesex for any purpose whatever except under one or two alternative conditions, either by getting a separate Act of Parliament or by obtaining the consent of the Middlesex County Council. In opposing this Bill I am mainly interested, in so far as it interferes with the necessary operation of the London County Council; but I am informed that the Bill is not purely directed against the London County Council, but against the Metropolitan Asylums Board, with the object of preventing the acquisition by that Board of land in the County of Middlesex for the erection of a hospital for infectious diseases. Of course, the presence of a hospital for infectious diseases in a district is not a desirable acquisition to that district. But a hospital must be erected somewhere, and it seems only reasonable that such a hospital should be erected, more or less, in the open country rather than in the dense population of London. If burdens of this character have to be borne by the County of Middlesex, I would point out that that burden, whatever it may amount to, arises out of its proximity to London, and that that proximity, on the whole, confers on the County of Middlesex the balance of advantage. But Middlesex is not the only county surrounding this great Metropolis. Kent and Surrey stand in exactly the same relation to the southern part of London as Middlesex stands to the northern portion, and why should an exemption be granted to Middlesex that is not also extended to Kent, Surrey, and Essex? It is obvious that if

Middlesex is to be favoured as the hon. Gentleman suggests, the burden on other counties surrounding London will be trebled. This is not a question concerning only the hospital for infectious diseases. It may be a question whether some limitation might not properly be placed on the powers of a Local Authority to acquire land in another district for objects which are offensive or unpleasant, such as hospitals for infectious diseases or the disposal of sewage; but that is a question that I have no doubt will be fully considered when raised in a proper manner before this House. But justice imperatively requires that limitations of this kind should be granted and imposed, if at all, by a Public Statute, and not by a Private Bill introduced as this is. I desire, as a member of the London County Council, just for a moment to point out to the House how this Bill would cripple the operation of the London County Council. This Council has powers conferred by Public Statute to obtain land for at least six distinct public purposes, and those are—open spaces, lunatic asylums, industrial schools, main drainage, fire brigade buildings, and the housing of the working classes. These are powers conferred by Public Statute—general powers to acquire land anywhere; and if this Bill became law, then it would be impossible for the London County Council to acquire a single yard of land in the County of Middlesex for any of the purposes I have mentioned without either by obtaining a special Act of Parliament, or, in the alternative, the consent of the Middlesex County Council which might, on the one hand, be arbitrarily withheld or, on the other, granted subject to an arbitrary bargain. I will give to the House a practical illustration of the mischievous effect of this Bill in relation to one of the most important of the subjects I have stated—namely, the housing of the working classes. Many of us think one of the most effectual modes of grappling with this great question is to provide dwellings for the working classes some miles out of town, and that view the House confirmed on Wednesday last. The House is no doubt aware that, under part of the Housing of the Working Classes Act, the London County Council has power to acquire land and erect workmen's dwell-

ings out of the locality; and there is at this moment a project before a Committee of the London County Council to erect such dwellings some miles out of town. It is very probably the most convenient site we could find for the purpose and be situate in the County of Middlesex, and if that Bill becomes law we could now proceed without either the expense of a special Act of Parliament or with the consent of the Middlesex County Council, and this interference with the beneficent powers conferred upon the London County Council by Public Statute is to be brought about by a Private Bill. But, Sir, it is not only the London County Council that is deeply concerned in opposing this Bill. I am glad to see that the hon. Baronet who represents the Uxbridge Division (Sir Frederick Dixon-Hartland) has put down a notice of opposition to the Second Reading in terms similar to my own, and many Local Authorities—I may mention amongst them the Vestry of Hampstead—have petitioned against this Bill. I do not for a moment suppose that this Bill, so monstrous as it is, has any chance of going successfully through the ordeal of a Committee upstairs, but I do not think the petitioners should be put to the trouble and expense of further opposing it, and, therefore, I ask the House to take upon itself the responsibility of rejecting it. Just one word upon what my hon. Friend the Member for the Tottenham Division (Mr. Howard) said regarding the provisions for music and dancing licences. I have nothing to do with them; but I may point out that one hon. Gentleman, whose name is on the back of this Bill, with a wise idea as to the fate of his Private Bill, has taken the precaution to put these licensing provisions in a Public Bill, so that the House will have another opportunity of pronouncing an opinion upon them. I now ask the House in the terms of my Motion to reject this Bill.

Amendment proposed, to leave out the word "now," and at the end of the Question to add the words "upon this day six months."—(Mr. Pickersgill.)

Question proposed, "That the word 'now' stand part of the Question."

COLONEL HUGHES (Woolwich): I feel that this Bill ought to have the attention both of the Home Secretary

(Mr. Asquith) and the President of the Local Government Board (Mr. H. H. Fowler), because it is putting in the hands of the Middlesex County Council a power that is already vested in the two Departments I have mentioned. For instance, many of the cemeteries in the Middlesex district are used by people from London; many of these cemeteries will require to be enlarged; but under this Bill that could not be done without the consent of the Middlesex County Council; and if that consent were refused, I suppose the dead would have to be buried in some of the already overcrowded cemeteries of London. As has been well said, why should Middlesex be able to exclude these Public Bodies? Middlesex ought to bear its share of this necessary public work. Then the County Council of Middlesex, in regard to licensing, asks to be allowed to grant licences for music and dancing at any period of the year. They have, in common with other County Councils, that power once a year, and any application made at any other time has to be made to the Home Secretary; but if the County Council of Middlesex is to grant licences all the year round, the same thing ought to be extended to all the other County Councils. The 25th section of the Public Health Act gives power to a Burial Board to provide a cemetery within or without the limits of a parish, and that is desired to be altered only with regard to Middlesex. I think a Private Bill to alter a Public Act is a wrong way of proceeding; and then, if these alterations are really required, they should extend to all and every county. For that reason I support the Motion to reject the Bill on the Second Reading.

\***LORD GEORGE HAMILTON** (Middlesex, Ealing): I agree with my hon. Friend who has just spoken, that these proposals are worthy the close attention of the Home Secretary, the President of the Local Government Board, and the House generally. The hon. Gentleman who moved the rejection of the Bill made use of the stock argument that an Urban Authority should have power to place its nuisances connected with its administration, in the rural district, because less damage would be done to the community at large. But it never was intended by Parliament that any Urban Authority should be able to get rid of its nuisances

by putting them on another Urban Authority. The whole object of these powers was to give to those who had the control of the affairs of populous districts the power of placing sewage works, fever hospitals, and such like nuisances in places where there is a sparse population. Amongst the powers given three years ago was that of acquiring land in the County of Middlesex for certain purposes, but in the meantime the area of the County of Middlesex immediately surrounding London has become as populous as London itself. Though the population of London has rapidly increased, in no part has the ratio of population so rapidly increased as the area surrounding London. I can speak with some authority upon this point, because I have represented that area for some years past, and at the present moment it numbers more than 500,000. I do ask, is it fair an Urban Authority inside London shall have power to put its nuisances upon such a populous district, and that Urban Authority have no control over the matter? The hon. Gentleman says it is better to place a fever hospital in an isolated district rather than a populous one. But what do the Metropolitan Asylums Board do? They previously purchased a small piece of land in the most populous part of the metropolitan area, though there were many parts within the area less thickly inhabited; and having purchased that land, they put the fever hospital there in the midst of this populous part, which is a great nuisance to the neighbourhood, deteriorates the value of property, and produces disease in the locality; and the inhabitants who have to bear this nuisance are unable to avail themselves of the hospital because it belongs to another authority. It is cases like this that make the system of local administration a farce. In the same way, the London Central Authority has power to place cemeteries in any part of Middlesex, and when a cemetery is acquired it is only rated at its agricultural value. This Bill may, in the opinion of some, go too far. I do not press that the power of limiting, or the *locus standi*, of the Middlesex County Council, shall apply to the acquisition of land except in cases where the land required is for purposes which might constitute a nuisance, such as sewage farms, fever hospitals, or cemeteries, and I am quite ready to limit

the power which the Middlesex County Council ask for to those three purposes. I do hope the Government will allow the Bill to go to a Select Committee. It is a most important question, and one which every day assumes greater importance, so rapid is the increase in population in the area surrounding London that is not under the control of the London County Council that many of us may live to see it equal to, if not greater than, the population of the Metropolis; and, in the meantime, it is a monstrous injustice that upon this growing populous district, in consequence of an obsolete law, the London County Council should have power to put these nuisances. Now, I am quite ready to undertake that the powers shall be strictly limited to the three purposes I have mentioned. On that undertaking I hope the Government will allow the Bill to go to a Select Committee; and if they oppose it, I hope my hon. Friend will take a Division, as it is a matter that affects a very wide and important district.

\*THE PRESIDENT OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. H. H. FOWLER, Wolverhampton, E.): One or two hon. Members who have spoken upon this question have appealed to the Home Secretary and the President of the Local Government Board to state their views; but the noble Lord deprecates any statement of our views, and says the primary course would be to allow the Bill to go to a Select Committee. There are one or two points I should like to correct in the statement of the noble Lord about which he must have been misinformed, as he would not intentionally mislead the House. He referred to an obsolete law under which the London County Council could inflict a nuisance upon another district. That is beyond my comprehension altogether. No Public Body has any power under any legislation to create a nuisance anywhere. No Public Body could acquire land except in one of two ways, either under Parliamentary powers which it had already received, and then by agreement with the owner, or compulsorily by the sanction of this House, either in the shape of a Provisional Order or an Act of Parliament; and no Public Body can borrow money for any of the purposes the noble Lord has mentioned without the sanction of the Local Government Board, which

sanction is rarely given without a previous local inquiry, and I can only say from the experience of my short period of office that the protection afforded to the public by means of the inquiry and the action of the Local Government Board is at once economical and effective. I must correct the noble Lord with reference to the action of my predecessor in the establishment of a fever hospital at Tottenham. I am not going to embark upon that subject, but I can tell the noble Lord that he has been misled as to the facts. All that has been done has been done by Mr. Ritchie himself, who sanctioned for 12 months the erection of a temporary hospital to meet a temporary emergency, after which the question would have to be carefully considered. As to the death rate, that has rather decreased than increased. The proposal here is an attempt by Private Bill to alter the public law. If that law is to be altered, I am prepared to argue it at the proper time and under proper circumstances, but I think we have had enough of private alterations of public procedure. Public Bodies can, as I have stated, purchase by agreement, or compulsorily, if Parliament sanctions it; but this Bill proposes there is to be a new Body, entitled the Middlesex County Council, and they shall have the power to interfere with compulsory purchase, and are to be legally entitled to veto any agreement between a landowner and the London County Council for the purchase of land within their district. I say no such power has been asked by any Public Body before; it would be an entirely new departure in our legislation, and if it is to be made, let the other County Councils of England have the same power. Why is Middlesex to have it, and not Kent, or Surrey, or Essex, or Lancashire? The noble Lord has been for many years in this House a strong defender of freedom of contract, but this is the most extraordinary proposal to annul freedom of contract that has ever been submitted. I am authorised by the Home Secretary to say that, so far as his Department is concerned, he concurs in the views the Local Government Board take that this is a Bill the House ought not to allow.

MR. STEPHENS (Middlesex, Hornsey) said, that they in Middlesex did not know any reason why Kent or Surrey

should not have the power asked by this Bill; that was for them to say; but he thought that the outlying districts of London ought not to become mere places for the deposit of whatever was dangerous, infectious, or polluted. He could give the House an illustration of the extraordinary inconvenience to which some of the outlying districts were put. In his own parish of Finchley they had three cemeteries belonging to three wealthy London parishes—Islington, St. Pancras, and Marylebone. Those cemeteries derived a profitable trade, and yet were rated at an agricultural value. But around those cemeteries no building took place, the result being that the rating value was lowered, which was a great hardship upon the district which had to incur heavy expenditure. London should make provision within her own limits for all cases that had been mentioned. So far as hospitals for infectious diseases were concerned, the Local Government Board and all concerned ought to feel that there was no sound sanitary reason why persons suffering from such diseases should be transported from one Urban Sanitary or Local Authority to another. They could be provided for in London itself, and in a far better way than by having them sent to some other and more remote part of the district around the Metropolis. Taking them to distant parts appeared to him as likely to leave the germs of disease, or to cause its spread either from the patients themselves or from the passing to and fro of the attendants. That was a great danger which it should be easy to avoid. He did not see why provision should not be made within the borders of a county to look after the infectious cases arising within its borders, and he was of opinion that the Middlesex County Council could not do otherwise than it had done. He presumed, indeed, that its action would be followed by other counties. These outlying districts were supposed to be part of the Metropolis; but they would not be long part of it if they were to have these institutions placed in their midst. So far as open spaces were concerned, they had not been very successful as yet in their invitation to the London County Council; but while they hoped for their co-operation in the preservation of such spaces, they declared that, having heavy burdens of their own to bear, it was too

bad if they were to be asked to support the institutions of other authorities.

\*MR. BARTLEY (Islington, N.) said, he would like to point out to the hon. Member who had just spoken that in his (Mr. Bartley's) district, which was smaller by far than the hon. Member's—being only a mile and a quarter in extent—he had a larger population, numbering nearly 100,000 persons; and to have a cemetery in such a district was simply, he maintained, an impossibility. It was carrying the idea too far to imagine that they could keep all these institutions within their own district boundaries.

MR. J. W. BENN (Tower Hamlets, St. George's) said, perhaps the House was not aware that the Middlesex County Council had a lunatic asylum in London, and that they had just erected offices for their own convenience in the Metropolis. Would the promoters of the Bill propose to remove these offices? He was rather astonished that they should hear those complaints from the Middlesex County Council of the burdens that were inflicted by the London institutions being sent out there. He would remind them that London received a large addition to her unemployed and paupers from the County of Middlesex, and the difficulties with which the London County Council were confronted were thereby aggravated and increased.

\*MR. JOHN BURNS (Battersea) said there were one or two reasons why the Bill should be rejected. There was a tendency on the part of the persons promoting or managing asylums, industrial schools, hospitals, and kindred institutions to shift from the centre of the city or town as the population increased. The reason of that was that the health of the inmates was of considerable importance, and it was materially improved by the change, and, besides, economy of administration was marked in every case where transfer of hospital had been effected from the centre to the suburbs. Now, if that view were generally adopted, the Middlesex County Council should not have the power of determining that institutions of that class should not be erected in their county—they should not have the power without at least consulting with the London County Council. It had also been suggested that hospitals in London should be turned into surgical depôts, and that patients should be received in institutions

outside London. The County Council, however, under this Bill would not have the power to erect a hospital or any other building in any part of Middlesex unless the Middlesex Council approved. He regretted that the Chairman of the Middlesex County Council had not considered what were the relations between that Body and the London County Council. The Middlesex County Council wanted the London County Council to contribute £275,000 for the acquisition of the Alexandria Park for the benefit of the Middlesex people. Not three years ago they came to them and suggested that it would be more convenient for them to send their pauper lunatics to Wandsworth. The London Council at once transferred the Wandsworth Lunatic Asylum to the Middlesex County Council. In fact, the London County Council had shown a disposition to make concessions in every reasonable respect in their relations with Local Authorities. The proposal in the Bill meant practically to put a fence round London and give the Middlesex Council power to say whether certain institutions should be erected unless on conditions which they would impose. There was no attempt in the Bill to provide for the requirements of the London people who were pushing themselves out to the county districts beyond the Metropolis. The Bill was nothing more nor less than an attempt on the part of a comparatively small number of rich people who made their money in the City, and by living in the suburbs escaped the poor rate and the pauper lunatic rate, and enjoyed all the pleasures and amenities of the City, to throw on the London County Council all the burdens and physical disadvantages of looking after the poor, the sick, and the lunatic paupers. He only hoped that the remarks made by the last speaker on that side of the House would go home to every Member who had listened to them. He said it was perfectly possible for an infectious disease hospital to be erected in a crowded district without being a danger to the community at large. If that was applicable to Battersea, Chelsea, and other districts of London, it was doubly applicable to districts 20 miles from London, where the chances in the country of infection were considerably reduced. He trusted that this attempt on the part of the Middlesex

Council would obtain no support from the House—that it would be resisted by the House, and that, in the interest of 5,000,000 of people, it would meet with the treatment it undoubtedly deserved.

Question put, and negatived.

Main Question, as amended, put, and agreed to.

Second Reading put off for six months.

## NOTICE OF MOTION.

### EMPLOYMENT IN NAVAL ESTABLISHMENTS.

SIR J. GORST (Cambridge University): I beg to give notice that on going into Committee of Supply on the Navy Estimates I shall move—

“That, in the opinion of this House no person should be engaged in the naval establishments on wages insufficient for a proper maintenance, and that the conditions of labour as regards hours, wages, insurance against accident, provision for old age, &c., should be such as to afford an example to private employers throughout the country.”

## QUESTIONS.

### THE NORTH BIERLY MAGISTRACY.

MR. BYLES (York, W.R., Shipley): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether his attention has been called to certain correspondence, extending over several years, between the Clerk to the Guardians in the North Bierly Union, the Lord Lieutenant of the West Riding, and the Lord Chancellor, with respect to the serious inconvenience which is suffered in the said Union, owing to the insufficient number of county magistrates resident within it; and whether he will confer with the Lord Chancellor with a view to the appointment upon his recommendation of additional and suitable magistrates for that part of the West Riding which comprises the North Bierly Union?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. ASQUITH, Fife, E.): Yes, Sir; this matter is at present engaging the Lord Chancellor's attention; and as soon as he comes to a final decision upon it, I will inform my hon. Friend.

## POSTAL SERVICE REGULATIONS.

SIR JOSEPH PEASE (Durham, Barnard Castle): I beg to ask the Postmaster General whether any regulations exist in the Post Office by which any adult *employés* engage at any period of their service to enter the Army; whether there are any regulations affecting telegraph messengers which require them to do so; and whether there are any regulations for the admission of Army Reserve men into the service of the Post Office which affect the promotion of those who are already employed there?

MR. SNAPE (Lancashire, S.E., Heywood): At the same time, I beg to ask the right hon. Gentleman whether the late Postmaster General issued an Order that all telegraph messengers should, at the age of 16, leave the Service, and join the Army or Navy; whether, at present, the boys are being compelled to sign an agreement that they will conform to this Order; and whether he will give instructions that it be rescinded?

THE POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. A. MORLEY, Nottingham, E.): No such regulation as that mentioned in paragraph 1 exists, but a limited number (about 200) of the Post Office Volunteer Corps are allowed to enlist in the Army, on the condition that in the event of warlike operations they may be called upon to perform postal and telegraphic duties with the military forces of the country. In answer to paragraph 2, I will read to my hon. Friend the following extract from the form which has to be signed by telegraph messengers on their appointment:—

"If, at the age of 18, or on leaving the Post Office Service at 19, I enlist in the Army, and bear a good character on passing into the Reserve, I shall, before others who have not at any time been in the Post Office Service, be presented to the Civil Service Commissioners for a certificate, with a view to employment in an established capacity."

My hon. Friend will see that enlistment in the Army is optional, and I may say there is no regulation requiring telegraph messengers to enter the Army. By regulations made in November, 1891, soldiers, either of the Reserve or time-expired, are accepted as candidates for the position of postman in preference to other applicants who have no special

claim based on past services, and subject to the reports as to character being good, and to their satisfying the requirements of the Civil Service Commissioners, they are appointed. I have received a large number of complaints against the hardship which these regulations inflict upon the class of telegraph messengers; and, although there has hardly yet been time to fairly test the system, the subject is receiving my careful consideration.

\*MR. CREMER (Shoreditch, Haggerston): Arising out of the answer, may I ask the right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury a question? I wish to know whether the head of a Department has any authority to compel the subordinates and *employés* in his Department to perform duties and labours other than those for which they were engaged in connection with the Department; and whether, if the head of a Department imposes such obligations on the subordinates and *employés*, he is authorised to punish them for neglecting to perform such duties?

\*THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. W. E. GLADSTONE, Edinburgh, Midlothian): Undoubtedly the answer to my hon. Friend's question taken generally would be in the negative; but, at the same time, it would be very difficult to make the answer applicable to a particular case without knowing the exact circumstances.

\*MR. CREMER: Perhaps I may be allowed to say that the question refers to the authority now exercised by the Postmaster General, concerning which I give notice that I shall put a question on the Paper.

## PROPOSED CHOLERA SHIP NEAR LONDON BRIDGE.

COLONEL HOWARD VINCENT (Sheffield, Central): I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board if he is aware that an application has been addressed to the Thames Conservancy for leave to place a cholera ship near London Bridge; and if, before it is sanctioned, he will take care, having regard to the vast surrounding population and the number of passengers conveyed up and down the river by the Victoria Steamboat Association, that the possible danger to the public health is fully considered?

\*THE PRESIDENT OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. H. H. FOWLER, Wolverhampton, E.): The Commissioners of Sewers of the City of London have under consideration the provision of hospital accommodation for cholera patients, and are in communication with the Thames Conservancy as to mooring a floating hospital in the river. The Conservators have not yet arrived at a decision on the question, and I am informed by them that they will give due attention to the question of any possible danger to public health which might arise from such a hospital.

#### DUNGLOE COURT HOUSE.

MR. T. D. SULLIVAN (Donegal, W.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland if he is aware that the Inspector of Weights and Measures for the Dungloe Petty Sessions District, County Donegal, was obliged to cease his inspection of weights and measures in the Dungloe Court House on the 7th of February, in order that the agent of the Marquess of Conyngham might have the use of the place as a rent office; is he aware that the Court House referred to is paid for and maintained out of the public rates; and whether he will direct that no such interference with the business of the public shall take place in future?

\*THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. J. MORLEY, Newcastle-upon-Tyne) said, the facts were as stated in the first paragraph of the question. The rent of the Court-house was, as he understood, paid by Grand Jury presentment, and it appeared that the Inspector of Weights and Measures had no statutory right to use the building for the purposes for which he acted as such Inspector. It did not look as if the agent had shown any good judgment in interfering with the public duty of the Inspector; but he (Mr. Morley) had no right whatever to interfere in the matter.

#### THE CONVICT DALY.

MR. WILLIAM REDMOND (Clare, E.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he is aware that poison was administered to John Daly in Chatham by mistake, with the result that he suffered a severe illness;

whether it is usual in such a case to make some remission of sentence to the prisoner; and whether any remission has been, or will be, made in the case of John Daly?

MR. ASQUITH: It is true that while John Daly was in Chatham Prison he suffered from taking a dose of belladonna, which was prescribed for him by the doctor. His illness was due to the abnormal strength of the tincture which had in mistake been supplied to the prison. The prison officials were entirely free from blame. The occurrence took place more than three years ago, and was fully inquired into by the Visitors of Chatham Prison, whose Report was laid before Parliament in 1890. Daly's health was not permanently affected, and it is not usual in a case of temporary illness caused by a pure misadventure to make any remission of a sentence. Every care is taken to adapt his treatment and prison work to his physical condition, and the state of his health is not such as to warrant any interference with his sentence.

MR. J. REDMOND (Waterford): May I ask whether it is not the fact that two doses of belladonna were at different times administered to Daly of such strength as to be poisonous, and whether he was not in consequence brought to death's door?

MR. ASQUITH: I do not know as to the administration of two separate doses. If the hon. Member wants information on the point he can put a question on the Paper. Daly no doubt suffered severely, but he has recovered.

MR. W. REDMOND: I wish to ask whether, so far from the prison officials being free from blame, the apothecary who mixed the medicine was not dismissed from his post for having made the blunder?

MR. ASQUITH: The Report of the Visitors was to the effect that the prison officials were not to blame. I must ask for notice of any further question on the point.

MR. W. REDMOND: I beg to give notice that I will call further attention, as soon as an opportunity presents itself, to the fact that Daly has been brought to death's door by being given poison on two occasions, and that his continued imprisonment is likely to result in his death. I believe that if he is not released you will kill him.



## THE BRISTOL RIOTS.

MR. HAVELOCK WILSON (Middlesbrough): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if his attention has been called to the disturbance which took place in the City of Bristol on the 22nd December, 1892; and if he will appoint a Commissioner to proceed to Bristol to inquire into all the circumstances of the case?

MR. ASQUITH: I am aware, from representations which have been made to me by various bodies in Bristol, that there is a widespread desire in that city for some inquiry into what took place on the day in question. But no specific facts, either by way of information or complaint, have been as yet brought to my notice such as would justify me in taking the action which my hon. Friend suggests. I will give careful consideration to any written statement which may be furnished to me by persons acquainted with the facts; but until I have fuller knowledge of the circumstances I cannot decide whether the case is one in which the Home Office ought, in accordance with precedent and policy, to institute an inquiry.

## IMPRISONED SEAMAN AT BILBAO.

MR. HAVELOCK WILSON: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs if he has had any Report from Bilbao with reference to the release of the seaman Shilling; whether he has been released; and, if so, upon what conditions; and if he could lay upon the Table of the House the Correspondence which has passed between the Consul and the Foreign Office?

\*THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Sir EDWARD GREY, Northumberland, Berwick): Three seamen, an Englishman named Shilling, an American, and a Swede, belonging to the British ship *Newcastle*, were arrested on a charge of assaulting the Spanish police. The British Consul at Bilbao at once intervened on their behalf, and succeeded in obtaining the release of the two latter, against whom the charge was less serious. Their own Consuls declined to interfere, as they were serving on a British vessel. The

Fiscal originally demanded two years' imprisonment for Shilling, assault on the police being a grave offence in Spain, but in deference to the Consul's frequent appeals, the demand was reduced to two months, and a fine of £5. The time passed in prison before trial was reckoned in the sentence, and the man is now released and sent home. If it be thought worth while after this statement the Correspondence will be laid upon the Table of the House.

MR. HAVELOCK WILSON: I should like to ask the hon. Gentleman as to what the duties of a British Consul are, what are the hours of labour, whether they can leave their offices entirely in the hands of Vice Consuls, and whether Vice Consuls can leave them entirely in the hands of clerks?

\*MR. SPEAKER: That is clearly a question which the hon. Member should put on the Paper.

## VOLUNTEER EXPENDITURE.

MR. BEITH (Inverness, &c.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War if he is aware that in many corps (especially Artillery) of Volunteers the capitation grant and other allowances fall far short of their expenditure necessary to maintain their efficiency; that to meet the extra expenditure for the erection and maintenance of drill-halls, batteries, and ranges, &c., the officers, in addition to supplying their own uniform, subscribing to prize funds, and other inducements for keeping up the strength of the corps, have undertaken heavy pecuniary liabilities, and that the obligations thus incurred prevent the filling up of vacant commissions; and whether the cost and maintenance of the necessary buildings will in future be borne by the War Department?

\*THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (Mr. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN, Stirling &c.): The expenditure of Volunteer corps was carefully investigated in 1887, and the Report of the Committee on the subject was presented to Parliament. As a result, the grants to corps have been materially increased. I am, however, prepared to consider special cases where increased expenditure has followed changes of organization. I am now inquiring into the expenses of field batteries.

**THE HOWE COURT MARTIALS.**

**ADMIRAL FIELD** (Sussex, Eastbourne): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty whether their Lordships' Minute on the two court martials arising out of the stranding of H.M.S. *Howe*, recently issued to the Fleet, can be laid upon the Table of the House for the information of Members?

**THE SECRETARY TO THE ADMIRALTY** (Sir U. KAY SHUTTLEWORTH, Lancashire, Clitheroe): The desire of my hon. and gallant Friend has been anticipated. I laid the Admiralty Minute on the Table on 14th February, and it is in the Vote Office to-day, for the use of Members.

**COMMISSIONS IN THE ROYAL ARTILLERY.**

**MR. VICARY GIBBS** (Herts., St. Albans): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether, in view of the fact that evidence has been privately submitted to him that hardship will be suffered if the five commissions promised half yearly in the Royal Artillery to officers of the Artillery Militia be reduced to two in March next, he will re-consider his determination in the matter?

**\*MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN**: I regret extremely that disappointment should be felt at the unavoidable reduction in the vacancies in the Royal Artillery to be competed for by Militia Artillery candidates; but, in consequence of the small number of commissions which can be given in the regiment generally, and having regard to the claims of the cadets at the Royal Military Academy, I am sorry that I cannot see my way to extending the number.

**LOANS TO WORKING-MEN'S BUILDING SOCIETIES.**

**MR. JOHN WILSON** (Govan): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether he will lay on the Table a statement showing the number of working-men's Building Societies that have received loans from the Public Loan Commissioners, and the amounts so advanced; and whether, considering that the Commissioners only advance to the extent of one-half of the whole value of buildings, will this amount be extended to three-fourths?

**THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY** (Sir J. T. HIBBERT, Oldham):

A statement of the loans made by the Public Works Loan Commissioners for labourers' dwellings is already published every year in the Commissioners' Annual Report to Parliament, and on page 18 of their Report for 1891-2 will be found a list of such loans outstanding on March 31 last. Their next Report will continue this information up to March 31, 1893. The limit of one-half the value up to which the Public Works Loan Commissioners have power to lend is fixed by Statute; and in face of the decided opinion of the Commissioners, specially constituted by Parliament an independent body, against extending the limit, I can hold out no hope that the Government will propose legislation with that object.

**THE LABOURERS (IRELAND) ACTS.**

**MR. CREAN** (Queen's Co., Ossory): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland if he can state how many cottages were erected under the Labourers (Ireland) Acts in the Mountrath division of the Mountmellick Union, and cost of same; the number of cottages in respect of which schemes were adopted in said Union, but were not carried out, with the respective rates of adoption; and why said schemes were not carried into execution?

**\*MR. J. MORLEY** said, that three labourers' cottages had been erected in the Mountrath Electoral Division of the Mountmellick Union at a cost of about £390. Various schemes for the erection of a number of houses had been submitted from time to time by the Board of Guardians, and the Local Government Board had made Provisional Orders, dated respectively 3rd February, 1887, 31st May, 1888, 12th March, 1890, and 26th June, 1891, authorising the erection of 61 cottages in the Union. Of these cottages 32 had been erected, and 19 were being built. Of the remaining 10, in two cases the Guardians had failed to get contractors at a reasonable price, in one there had been a difficulty in obtaining possession of the site, four had been abandoned by the Guardians, and, as regarded three, the arbitrators' award had only just been made.

**MR. CLANCY** (Dublin Co., N.): Has the right hon. Gentleman's attention been directed to a resolution which has been passed by a great many Boards of Guardians in Ireland with reference to the excessive prolixity and cost of the present procedure for the erection of labourers' cottages; and, if so, will steps be taken to provide a remedy?

\***MR. J. MORLEY**: I have more than once stated that there is no doubt considerable protraction in carrying out schemes under the Labourers (Ireland) Acts, but my hon. Friend will remember that precautions must be taken in the interests of the ratepayers. At the same time, I quite agree that it is desirable that the procedure should be simplified if possible, and I will endeavour to consider any proposal that may be made to me on the subject.

#### GUN LICENCES IN THE KANTURK DISTRICT.

**MR. FLYNN** (Cork, N.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether in the Kanturk district, County Cork, any magistrate other than Major Hutchinson, Resident Magistrate, is authorised to issue gun licences; and, if not, why is this authority confined to this gentleman; is he aware that Major Hutchinson peremptorily refused to grant a gun licence to Mr. John A. O'Connor, a merchant in Kanturk; whether he can state upon what grounds this refusal was based; and on what principle does a stipendiary magistrate act in giving or withholding an ordinary gun licence?

\***MR. J. MORLEY**: I am causing inquiry to be made on this subject.

**MR. FLYNN**: I will put the question down for Monday.

#### RAILWAY RATES IN SCOTLAND.

**MR. JACKS** (Stirlingshire): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade if he is aware that many trades and industries in Scotland are being paralysed by the high rates now being charged by the Railway Companies; whether, in view of this serious state of things, the Board of Trade will use its influence to induce the Railway Companies to charge the old rates until the matter is finally arranged, collecting any difference between the old and new

rates then, instead of charging the new rates and returning any rebate after the settlement of the matter; and whether he could make this a condition of the extension to Easter of the time for the final adjustment of rates?

**THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE** (Mr. MUNDELLA, Sheffield, Brightside): I have received a considerable number of complaints of increases in railway rates from Scotland. All that I can say now is that I am pressing the Scotch Companies in the matter through the Railway Association. But I have at present no power to impose conditions on them.

#### APPLICATION FOR COMPENSATION.

**MR. CLANCY**: I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether his attention has been directed to the case of Mr. Andrew James M'Caughey, second class officer of Excise, Dublin, who died in August last of typhoid fever contracted in an insanitary station in the discharge of his duty; whether the application of the widow of Mr. M'Caughey for compensation for the loss of her husband has been refused by the Board of Inland Revenue, although the Board are responsible for the insanitary condition of the stores in which Mr. M'Caughey was employed, and although Mr. M'Caughey had served a period sufficient to entitle him to a pension if, instead of being killed, he had been merely incapacitated; and whether Mrs. M'Caughey's application for compensation will now be re-considered?

\***SIR J. T. HIBBERT**: I have consulted the Commissioners of Inland Revenue on this case, and am informed that the Board have had a Report from the Sanitary Officer of the District, and have satisfied themselves that the station was not in an insanitary condition. In these circumstances, the Treasury have no power to make a grant to Mrs. M'Caughey.

#### CLERKSHIPS IN THE LEGACY DUTY OFFICE.

**MR. CLANCY**: I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether the recent competition for clerkships in the Legacy Duty Office was confined to persons who had passed the final ex-

amination of the Incorporated Law Society of the United Kingdom; if so, why persons who had passed the final examination of the Incorporated Law Society of Ireland were excluded; and whether, in view of the fact that the final examination of the Incorporated Law Society of Ireland affords as good a test of the competency for the duties of the Legacy Office as that of the similar Body in England, he will take steps so to alter the regulations regarding candidates for the Legacy Duty Office as in future to give equal rights and privileges to English and Irish candidates?

\*SIR J. T. HIBBERT: The recent competition for clerkships in the Legacy Duty Office was confined to persons who had passed the final examination of the Incorporated Law Society of the United Kingdom. This course was considered advisable, as this competition—the first of its kind—was to fill vacancies at the Head Office in London only. The matter will again be considered before another competition is held.

MR. CLANCY: Will the right hon. Gentleman state why advertisements were inserted in the Irish papers asking Irishmen to compete?

SIR J. T. HIBBERT: I cannot answer that question.

MR. CLANCY: Are we to understand that in future this distinction will not be made between the two classes?

SIR J. T. HIBBERT: The question will be re-considered.

#### THE CASE OF WARDER JESSETT.

MR. JEFFREYS (Hants, Basingstoke): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether W. D. Warder Jessett was informed, on December 15th, 1891, at Aldershot, by the Commanding Royal Engineer, that he should then take the pension he had earned and cease from active employment; whether he is aware that, in consequence of this communication, Warder Jessett did resign on June 7th, 1892, but the War Office has refused to grant him the pension; whether he is aware that Warder Jessett enlisted in the Royal Sappers in 1847, served during the Crimean War, Indian Mutiny, and other campaigns, receiving medals for his services; and whether the War Office will grant Warder Jessett the pension to which the Commanding

Royal Engineer said he was entitled, and on the faith of which he resigned?

\*MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: Warder Jessett was required to give up his appointment on account of age. His military service was not sufficient to give him a pension, and the civil appointment he subsequently held was not one which carried superannuation. The Commanding Royal Engineer only required Warder Jessett to retire on whatever pension he had earned. It turned out that he had earned no more than a compassionate allowance, which has been paid to him. I will, however, give the case further consideration, and I should be very glad if I found that anything could be done for him, although I cannot say I am hopeful.

#### THE GOVERNMENT OF IRELAND BILL.

CAPTAIN BAGOT (Westmoreland, Kendal): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether, in the event of the Home Rule Bill becoming law, the Resident Magistrates or other officials now having the power to call on British troops quartered in Ireland to assist the police on necessary occasions will still have the same authority?

\*MR. J. MORLEY: I hope that the hon. and gallant Gentleman will not think me wanting in courtesy to him if I say that this is one of those speculative and hypothetical questions as to which no good purpose can be served by discussions in the form of question and answer across the Table of the House. I hope, therefore, he will be kind enough to postpone the consideration of the difficulty until the Second Reading of the Committee stage of the Home Rule Bill.

#### DEFICIENT FREE SCHOOL ACCOMMODATION.

MR. PICTON (Leicester): I beg to ask the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education if he can say approximately in how many cases representations have been made to the Education Department, in accordance with 54 and 55 Vic., c. 56, s. 5, that free school accommodation is deficient; in what mode have such representations been made; what action the Department has taken; and what has been the result?

THE VICE PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL (Mr. ACLAND, York, W.R., Rotherham) : Representations have been made to the Education Department, in the mode prescribed under Section 5 of the Free Education Act, from 75 school districts. The number of children for whom free places have thus been claimed is estimated approximately at about 25,000, out of 1,125,000 who were still paying fees up to September 1 last ; but it is impossible to give exact figures, as in some representations the number of children has not been given, and in others has been given inaccurately. In 25 of these cases sufficient free accommodation is now being provided without recourse having been had to the issue of notices. In six cases notices of deficiency have been issued as provided by the Act. In the remainder the local inquiries prescribed by the Act are still proceeding. As to the result of the working of this section of the Act up to the present time, it must be admitted that the process by which parents who desire it can obtain completely free education for their children is necessarily a tedious and difficult one in many cases, notwithstanding the efforts of the Department to make it as easy as possible. I fear that many parents do not yet know of their right to free education, and that even when they do know they discover in some cases that there are many difficulties in the way.

MR. PICTON : Will the right hon. Gentleman say whether the demand has been fully met in Liverpool ?

MR. ACLAND : The demand has been met to a considerable extent by the opening of several more free schools, but I am not prepared to say that it has been fully met.

#### DISCHARGES FROM THE 1st LIFE GUARDS.

MR. LABOUCHERE (Northampton) : I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether eight non-commissioned officers have been discharged from the 1st Life Guards ; what were the grounds for this ; whether any inquiry was held respecting the allegations against these men ; and, if so, whether any opportunity was given to them to reply to any such allegations ; and whether, in view of these dismissals from the service of Her Majesty, any steps have been taken, or,

if not, will be taken, to inquire into the state of discipline in the regiment, and the responsibility of the commanding and other officers in connection therewith ?

\*MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN : The non-commissioned officers discharged from the 1st Life Guards were discharged for the good of the Service, not on the ground of any specific charges, but on account of general neglect of duty. Steps have been taken to inquire into the state of discipline of the regiment and the responsibility of the commanding and other officers.

MR. LABOUCHERE : Had these non-commissioned officers an opportunity of defending themselves ?

MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN : No ; I have said there were no specific charges made against them, and, therefore, they had no opportunity of replying. The neglect of duty was patent and obvious.

MR. LABOUCHERE : Have they lost the chance of a pension ?

MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN : They have lost no chance of pension to which they were entitled. Those of them who came within the pensionable age have received pensions.

#### REMUNERATION FOR PETTY JURORS.

MR. LLOYD MORGAN (Carmarthen, W.) : I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether, having regard to the expense, inconvenience, and loss of time incurred by those who have to attend and serve as petty jurors, he will consider the question of introducing a Bill to provide for their remuneration ?

MR. ASQUITH : I am not prepared to introduce legislation on this subject. There is a Bill providing for the remuneration of common jurors in civil cases at the expense of the parties now before the House. As at present advised, I do not think that in criminal cases the existing practice should be changed.

#### REGISTRATION OF TRADE MARKS BY FOREIGNERS.

MR. FISHER (Fulham) : I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade by whose instructions the Comptroller General of Patents refuses to recognise the fourth paragraph of the Final Protocol in the International Convention

entered into between Her Majesty's Government and the United States of America; and whether he will take such steps as shall ensure applications for the registration of trade marks by foreign citizens being registered in this country according to the terms of the Convention?

**MR. MUNDELLA:** The Comptroller has statutory discretion under the Patents, &c., Acts of 1883 and 1888 to decline to register trade marks which he does not consider to come within the terms of those Acts, but an appeal lies from his decision to the Board of Trade or the Court, and if any applicant is aggrieved he can have no difficulty in obtaining the decision of the Court. There is no refusal on the part of the Comptroller to recognise the paragraph referred to by the hon. Member; but, having regard to the decisions of Mr. Justice Stirling in the Syrup of Figs case, and of Mr. Justice North in the Carter's Little Liver Pills case, I am considering whether any and, if so, what steps are necessary to bring the English law and the Convention into complete harmony.

#### FOREIGN GAME.

**SIR FREDERICK MILNER** (Notts, Bassetlaw): I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if it is the case that hares and other game imported from abroad can be sold without a licence; if so, whether anything can be done to place the vendor of foreign game and the vendor of English game on an equal footing?

**\*THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER** (Sir W. HARCOURT, Derby): The fact is as stated in the question. I think that the distinction between the vendor of foreign game and the vendor of English game is not justifiable, and the Inland Revenue have the matter under their consideration.

#### ALLOWANCES FROM FRIENDLY SOCIETIES.

**MR. BILL** (Staffordshire, Leek): I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board whether, with a view to a better provision for old age in the case of persons in receipt of allowances from Friendly Societies, he will cancel the Minute of the Poor Law Commissioners, dated 27th March, 1840,

confirmed in a letter dated 5th January, 1870, which directs Boards of Guardians to take such allowances into account in deciding the amount of parish relief to be given in such cases?

**\*MR. H. H. FOWLER:** Neither the Poor Law Commissioners nor the Local Government Board have made any Order which imposes on the Guardians any obligation to take into account allowances from Friendly Societies in deciding as to the amount of Poor Law relief which should be given in the case of persons who are receiving aid from such Societies. The principle, however, was laid down in the Minutes of 1840, and the letter of 1870, that, as destitution is the only ground of claim to relief at the cost of the rates, the income of the person applying for relief, from whatever source it is obtained, should in strictness be taken into account in determining the amount of relief that should be given by the Guardians. This is a matter for the consideration of the Royal Commission now sitting, and pending their Report I do not think it would be proper for me to issue any Order on the subject.

#### SOLDIERS AT SHEERNESS.

**MR. KNATCHBULL-HUGESSEN** (Kent, Faversham): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether he is aware that the number of soldiers quartered in the barracks at Sheerness is considerably below the number for which accommodation is provided, and below the number usually stationed there; and whether, as this circumstance acts most prejudicially to the trade of the town, he will take steps to largely augment the force now doing duty there?

**\*MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN:** I am afraid that the strength of a garrison must depend on the duties required from it, and not upon the effect it may have upon the local trade. The works at Sheerness require two companies of garrison artillery, and that force is maintained there. Some years ago a dépôt was stationed at Sheerness, but it is not now required.

#### TARGET PRACTICE SEAWARDS.

**SIR WILLIAM PEARCE** (Plymouth): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade on what day the Report of the Committee on Target Practice Seawards will be issued?

**MR. MUNDELLA :** The Report is in the printer's hands, and we are pressing for it.

#### DEEP SEA FISHERIES BILL.

**DR. MACGREGOR (Inverness-shire):** I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland whether the Government will consider the desirability of including salmon in the Deep Sea Fisheries Bill, which they have announced their intention to introduce at an early date, especially as salmon is a deep sea fish?

**THE SECRETARY FOR SCOTLAND (Sir G. TREVELYAN, Glasgow, Bridgeton):** The Government, after full consideration, has resolved not to include salmon in the forthcoming Fishery Bill.

#### GLASGOW AND CARLISLE ROAD TRUST.

**MR. HOZIER (Lanarkshire, S.):** I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland when the determination of the Commissioners in the matter of the Glasgow and Carlisle Road Trust will be laid before Parliament?

**SIR G. TREVELYAN:** The determination in question was presented to Parliament on the 14th instant.

#### THE EVICTED TENANTS COMMISSION.

**MR. BARTLEY (Islington, N.):** I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether any further Supplementary Estimate will be submitted to the House for the costs of the Commission on Irish Evicted Tenants; and, if not, out of what Vote the costs have been defrayed?

**MR. HANBURY (Preston):** Will the right hon. Gentleman also say what arrangement is made as to the remuneration of a Judge of the High Court of Justice who sits on a Commission of this kind? Does his salary run during the time he is absent from his ordinary duty?

**MR. T. M. HEALY (Louth, N.):** Will the right hon. Gentleman state whether the salaries of Sir James Hannen and Justices Day and Smith were paid during the sittings of the Parnell Commission?

**\*SIR W. HARCOURT:** I will inquire into the way in which the question of Commissioners has been dealt with.

**MR. HANBURY:** But how has the present case been dealt with?

**\*SIR W. HARCOURT:** I cannot answer offhand. In answer to the first question asked, I have to say that no such Supplementary Estimate will be submitted. The cost has been defrayed out of the Vote already taken for temporary Commissions.

**MR. BARTLEY:** I beg to ask the right hon. Gentleman whether the cost of printing necessitated by the Commission on Irish Evicted Tenants has been defrayed out of the Supplementary Estimate, "Stationery Office and Printing," of £35,500; and, if not, out of what Vote it has been paid?

**SIR W. HARCOURT:** The cost of printing was provided for in the Supplementary Estimate referred to.

**MR. BARTLEY:** Am I to understand that the expenses of the Commission will be paid without any investigation, inquiry, or discussion in this House, and without the House having any knowledge of the circumstances?

**\*SIR W. HARCOURT:** I imagine the House is aware of the circumstances. I have answered the hon. Member's question and have said that provision for the expenditure will not be made by Supplementary Estimate.

**MR. JAMES LOWTHER (Kent, Thanet):** What are the items referred to as "temporary Commissions"?

**\*SIR W. HARCOURT:** It would be well to defer questions of this sort until the Supplementary Estimates are before us.

**MR. JAMES LOWTHER:** I will repeat the question on Monday.

#### CHOLERA PRECAUTIONS.

**SIR SEYMOUR KING (Hull, Central):** I wish to ask the President of the Local Government Board whether the Government has had under consideration the resolution passed at a Conference of representatives of Port Sanitary Authorities on 17th February at the Guildhall, in which they state their opinion that inasmuch as special cholera precautions carried out by the Port Sanitary Authorities are for the benefit of the whole population, these precautions so far as they are special should be carried out at the Imperial expense; and whether, in view of the urgent necessity of protecting the inland towns from disease imported from foreign parts, the Govern-

ment will concur in this recommendation?

\***MR. H. H. FOWLER** : I have as yet had no official communication with regard to the resolution referred to, but when it is received by me it shall have my careful consideration.

#### THE INDIAN TELEGRAPH DEPARTMENT.

**SIR SEYMOUR KING** : I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India whether the officers of the Indian Telegraph Department have submitted Memorials to the Government of India and the Secretary of State exhibiting a general discontent with the failure of the Government of India to carry out the recommendation contained in a Despatch of the Secretary of State to the Government of India, No. 13 T of 25th August, 1887, providing for the division of all officers below the rank of Chief Superintendent into six classes, thus abolishing grades, but not reducing the number of officiating steps possible in the event of a senior officer going on leave ; whether the object of the Secretary of State's Despatch was to accelerate promotion ; whether the Government of India has added to the Secretary of State's Scheme a rule of its own, to the effect that officiating promotion should no longer be granted from grade to grade, whereby an opposite effect has been produced from that intended by the Secretary of State ; and whether, in view of the continued discontent caused by this rule, the Secretary of State will direct the Government of India to carry out his own recommendations ?

**SIR E. GREY** (answering for **Mr. G. RUSSELL**) : The answers to the first two questions of the hon. Member are in the affirmative ; but the proposal to divide the service into six classes originated not with the Secretary of State but with the Government of India. Upon further consideration it was found necessary to make a rule that officiating promotion should not be granted from grade to grade ; but it was considered that any loss thus caused was outweighed by the other changes, advantageous to the officers, which were made at the same time. There is no present intention of altering this rule, which has been approved by the Secretary of State in Council.

#### INDIAN TELEGRAPH DEPARTMENT.

**MR. STANLEY LEIGHTON** (Shropshire, Oswestry) : I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India whether it was intended that the Order of the Secretary of State in his Despatch No. 13 T, 25th August, 1887, for reducing the number of officers in the Indian Telegraph Department from 104 to 84, as the lowest number deemed to be necessary for efficiency, should be final ; whether the Secretary of State is aware of recent action by the Government of India reducing the number of Assistant Superintendents in each grade with the effect of retarding promotion ; and whether he will take steps to secure the immediate recruitment of the Department, now reduced to 74 instead of 84, up to its full strength, in order to prevent stoppage of leave and overworking of the officers in the Department ?

\***SIR E. GREY** (Northumberland, Berwick) : The number, 84, has recently been increased to 86. This, under present conditions, is the normal strength of the Department. The Secretary of State has not received information as to any reduction of the number of Assistant Superintendents. For exceptional reasons the number of the staff has temporarily fallen to 74, but steps are now being taken to raise it to 86.

#### THE CHARGES OF RETURNING OFFICERS.

**MR. TUIITE** (Westmeath, N.) : I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board is it the intention of the Government to include in their contemplated legislation relating to Parliamentary elections any proposal dealing with the charges of Returning Officers ?

\***MR. H. H. FOWLER** : The Registration Bill introduced by me does not deal with the charges referred to in the question. I cannot at present state the nature of any contemplated legislation relating to Parliamentary elections.

#### PRISON WARDERS.

**MR. COMBE** (Surrey, Chertsey) : I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he has received a Petition from the convict warders of Her Majesty's prison at Woking ; and, if so, whether he will give it favourable consideration ?



**Mr. ASQUITH :** A number of Petitions have been received in the last few days from the officers of Woking Prison, which are at present under my consideration. As they are requesting a rate of superannuation in excess of the Civil Service scale, and as this demand was fully considered and rejected by the Prison Warders Committee as lately as 1891, I cannot hold out much hope of their receiving a favourable reply.

#### THE TREASON FELONY PRISONERS AT PORTLAND.

**Mr. CLANCY (Dublin Co., N.) :** I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to visits to the treason felony prisoners in Portland Convict Establishment, whether, if an application for permission to visit those prisoners be renewed by the London Amnesty Association, and if an undertaking be given by or on behalf of the persons for whom the permission is sought that the Prison Regulations as to visits of this character will be strictly observed, he will now consider it favourably, in view of the fact that the prisoners referred to will otherwise be deprived altogether of the privilege of visits which they are admitted to have earned by their good conduct?

**Mr. ASQUITH :** As I stated yesterday, I am anxious that these prisoners should not be deprived of the privilege of receiving visits. If the names of the intending visitors submitted to me are those of responsible persons, who will give such an undertaking as the hon. Member suggests, and if the prisoners are willing to receive them, I shall be prepared favourably to consider the application.

**Mr. J. REDMOND (Waterford)** asked whether the right hon. Gentleman would consider the desirability of informing the London Amnesty Association of the precise matters of which he had had to complain; and also if he would instruct the prison officials to inform visitors, when a visit took place, of the Prison Regulations, so that they might know what they had to do?

**Mr. ASQUITH :** I do not think that any complaint was made in regard to the Association referred to—it was made in the case of some other Body. The suggestion made in the latter part of the

hon. Gentleman's remarks appears to me to be a reasonable way of dealing with the matter.

#### LOUGH ERNE DRAINAGE.

**Mr. DANE (Fermanagh, N.) :** I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury how many out of the 1,448 cases which came before the Irish Board of Works for increases of rent in respect of the Lough Erne Drainage were in respect of holdings upon which judicial rents were not fixed; how many in respect of holdings upon which judicial rents had been fixed; what were the reasons in respect of the 291 cases in which the Board declined jurisdiction that it did so; is there any objection upon the part of the Board to lay upon the Table of the House the details of the expenditure of £210,000, £106,000 of which is in excess of the estimate, and what is the reason why the accounts of this important work have not been published as by Law prescribed; and whether, having regard to the fact of the enormous expenditure of £106,000 over the Estimates, and the fact that no detailed accounts as prescribed by the Statute have been published, the Treasury will consent to a sworn inquiry respecting the expenditure of this excess?

**SIR J. T. HIBBERT :** It has been impossible hitherto to obtain the information for which the hon. Member asks, but I am in communication with the Irish Board of Works, and if the hon. Member will repeat his question on Monday I may be in a position to give him an answer.

#### THE HOME RULE BILL.

**Mr. GIBSON BOWLES (Lynn Regis) :** I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury if he can state whether the words "an executive Committee of the Privy Council of Ireland," as used in Clause 5, Section 2, of the Irish Government Bill, 1893, imply certain members of that Privy Council to whom the Council has itself committed certain matters, or whether the committal to this Committee of such matters is to be the act of some authority other than the Privy Council itself?

**Mr. W. E. GLADSTONE :** I apprehend that the natural form in which a Committee of the Council would be appointed would be by an Order in

Council, but that is a pure matter of form. The actual selection of a Committee of Council is never made, so far as I know, by the Council itself, but it is the function of the Executive Government. That is the practice in Ireland hitherto, and I presume it will be the same under the Home Rule Bill.

#### TRIAL BY JURY IN BENGAL.

MR. PAUL (Edinburgh, S.) : I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India whether the Commission upon Trial by Jury in Bengal has yet been appointed ; who appointed, or who will appoint, it ; who compose, or will compose, it ; what are its powers and the scope of its inquiry ; when it may be expected to report ; and when Papers on the subject will be laid on the Table ?

\*SIR E. GREY (for Mr. G. RUSSELL) : A Commission has been appointed by the Viceroy, with the approval of the Secretary of State in Council, to consider, first, the classes of offences triable by juries in those districts of Bengal in which that method of trial has been introduced, and to report whether any, and, if so, what, changes in the classification now obtaining are desirable ; and, second, to consider and report whether any, and, if so, what, modifications of the provisions of the Criminal Procedure Code relating to the trial of offences triable by juries before Courts of Session are desirable for the purpose of preventing miscarriage of justice. The names of the Commissioners are as follows :— Mr. Justice Prinsep (President), Sir Griffith Evans, Maharaja Sir Jotendro Mohun Tagore, Sir Romesh Chunder Mitter, and Mr. Cecil Wilkin. The Secretary of State has desired the Viceroy to arrange that the deliberations of the Commission shall begin immediately, and shall be continued with as little intermission as possible ; but he is unable at present to name the date at which the Report is likely to be received, or when the Correspondence on the subject will be ready for presentation to Parliament.

#### RAILWAY SERVANTS' HOURS OF LABOUR BILL.

MR. CHANNING (Northampton, E) : I wish to ask the President of the Board

of Trade a question of which I have given him private notice—namely, whether he still intends to move that the Railway Servants' Hours of Labour Bill should be referred to the Standing Committee on Trade, and what step he proposes to take to carry out his suggestion that my own Bill on the same subject should be read a second time, and referred to the same Standing Committee ?

MR. MUNDELLA : I should have been very glad if the House had allowed a Second Reading to the Bill of my hon. Friend ; but it is objected to, and I cannot compel the House to read it a second time. As the hon. Member knows, this is a question of great urgency ; it is very important that the proposed Regulations should come into operation as soon as possible. If he will embody his proposals in the form of Amendments, they shall have most careful consideration.

MR. CHANNING : In view of the fact that the Bill will, in the opinion of many hon. Members, require amendment, will the right hon. Gentleman arrange to take it at a time when Amendments can be fully considered ?

MR. MUNDELLA : Of course, if Amendments are put upon the Paper they will be taken at a time when they can be considered ; but it is desirable that they should be put down in good time.

MR. CHANNING : I will put my Amendments upon the Paper to-day.

#### THE SCOTCH SUSPENSORY BILL.

SIR J. FERGUSSON (Manchester, N.E.) : We were informed that the Scotch Suspensory Bill would not be taken next week ; but it has been placed on the Paper for Monday next. Is any change contemplated in the arrangements ?

MR. W. E. GLADSTONE : I am not conscious of having stated that the Bill would not be taken next week. I think what I said was that we were not prepared to name a day for it. There is no intention of taking it on Monday. Ample notice will be given before it is taken.

## ORDERS OF THE DAY.

## SUPPLY—COMMITTEE.

Order for Committee read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair."

## LOCAL TAXATION (METROPOLIS).

## RESOLUTION.

MR. BARROW (Southwark, Bermondsey) said that, as a new Member, it was with great diffidence that he rose to ask the favourable consideration of the House to so vast a subject as the incidence of the taxation of London. He was somewhat relieved, however, by the knowledge that the subject was by no means a novel one in the House; neither was it a new subject to Londoners outside the House. This morning, in reading the papers, he noticed a statement—he did not know if it was true—to the effect that the London Conservative Members, at a Committee meeting on the previous day called to consider what action they should take relative to this question, had arrived at the conclusion that they should oppose the Resolution which stood in his name, and which was as follows:—"That provision ought to be made for further equalising the rates throughout the Metropolis." ["No, no!"] He was quite prepared to accept the denial of hon. Members opposite. He had wondered whether the hon. Member for Rotherhithe (Mr. Macdonald) would be a party to such a decision as that, seeing that his constituency as well as his (Mr. Barrow's) own was heavily oppressed by the anomalies of the incidence of taxation to which they were subjected. He was very glad to hear this denial of the London Conservative Members, because he anticipated the support of all the Provincial Members, and if they got a consensus of opinion, and they could agree amongst themselves in London, this subject would very soon be removed from the attention of Parliament. He would remind the House that London had spoken out in a very emphatic tone of voice at the last County Council election, which was mainly fought and won by the Progressive members upon the unjust and unfair incidence of taxation. ["No!"] Hon. Members

said "No," but he could assert that this subject was in the fore-front of all his election speeches. It also occupied a place in his address; and he knew that it held an equally prominent position in the addresses and speeches of other candidates at the election. Not only had the decision of London been pronounced in that large progressive majority on the County Council, but he would remind the House that there were more than twice as many Liberal and Radical Members returned to Parliament for London as sat in the last Parliament. From this he would argue that London was fully alive to the importance of this question, and that the demands of London could not be dealt lightly with. London was practically unique on the question of the anomalous condition of taxation. He did not know that there was another town or city so situated in the whole realm, no town or city in which the Governing Body did not raise equal rates. Now, in London they had 84 distinct Taxing Bodies outside the City itself. All kinds of rates were levied on all kinds of estimates of valuation, and there was no consistency whatever. For the reason that London was unique in this particular, he claimed the support of all the Provincial Members, so that London might be brought in line with what they themselves would hold to be common-sense policy. His Motion was by no means a revolutionary suggestion. If asked that there might be further powers for the equalization of rates, by which, of course, was inferred that there were some rates which were levied in common throughout London—as, for instance, the rate for Police, School Board, County Council, Asylums Board, and Poor Fund. But with regard to the last of these, although an amount was raised for the relief of the poorer parishes, conditions were connected with that relief which certainly were irksome, for they were to the effect that relief should only be given to those who were driven inside the poorhouse. To that he and his friends took exception. The rates which were raised in common for all London amounted to 3s. 3d. in the £1 upon all property assessed for rating. Out of the total rating of London of £7,750,000 this 3s. 3d. amounted to £5,000,000, leaving £2,750,000 which was raised by the 84 Local Bodies in

their respective districts, for the making and maintenance of roads and for sanitary purposes, for local lighting, local sewers, and for the payment of interest upon local debts. These rates varied so much as to create a glaring anomaly and inflict serious injustice. For instance, in Bow and Bromley these local rates amounted to 3s. 7d. in the £1, and in Poplar and Mile End to 3s. 8d., while in St. James's, Westminster, they were 1s. 0½d., in St. Martin's-in-the-Fields, 1s. 2½d., and in St. George's, Hanover Square, 1s. 3d.—or, generally, about one-third the amount of the poorer districts. Let them take another comparison—the rateable value per head of the population. It was in Bromley £3 5s. 6d., Bethnal Green £3 5s. 11d., and Bow £3 15s. 4d., while in St. James's, Westminster, it was £29 16s. 2d., in St. Martin's-in-the-Fields £35 17s. 3d., and in St. George's, Hanover Square, £23 11s. 10d.—that was an average of nine times as much as the three poorer parishes. To emphasise the inequality he would point out that a 1d. in the £1 in Bermondsey represented about £1,500; in St. James's, £3,104; in St. Martin's, £2,184; and in St. George's, £7,703. The total rate in parts of Whitechapel was 7s. 6½d. in the £1; in Bromley, 7s. 3d.; Bermondsey, 7s. 4d.; and Bow, 6s. 11d.; while in St. Martin's it was 3s. 10d.; St. James's, 4s. 2d.; in St. George's, 4s. 5½d., and Gray's Inn, 4s. 0½d. The average rate in the City of London was 4s. 8d., and he presumed the objection of the City to be absorbed in London arose chiefly from their favourable position in that respect. There was another fault in connection with the rating, and it was this: In the method of assessing property for rating purposes there were gross inequalities. In all the poorer districts the assessors were always under the obligation of making the property as valuable as possible, because rates being so high it was extremely inconvenient for them to increase the poundage. For the converse reason the wealthy districts of London did not need to raise their assessment value, otherwise their rates in the £1 would be infinitely smaller, and would attract, in a greater and more emphatic way than at present, public attention to the contrast between the way they were taxed and the way the poorer districts were taxed. ["No,

no!"] An hon. Member said "No." He would give a case to illustrate what he meant. At present there were several standing appeals by the London County Council against wealthy neighbourhoods with a view of requiring them to increase their assessments. He could give the Member who said "No" a positive instance. Bermondsey had appealed against the rating of Kensington and got the rating value increased by £35,000. He would give another illustration of the unfair way in which the existing anomalies worked as against the poorer districts. The cost of the roads in St. George's, Hanover Square, was £855 per mile, which only involved a rate of 4½d. in the £1. In Bermondsey the cost was £311 per mile, which involved taxation of 5½d. in the £1. In Whitechapel the cost was £592 per mile, requiring a rate of 7½d. in the £1, and in Mile End the cost was £530 per mile, which necessitated a charge of 10d. in the £1. And similar inequalities existed in regard to the construction and maintenance of local sewers. They would be asked before the Debate was over, perhaps—not in exact words, but in a manner which would convey the same idea—what had the West got to do with the South and East. Had it nothing to do with the sanitary arrangements of London—had it not as much to do with those matters as with the cost of the School Boards? If the funds were not forthcoming for sanitary improvements it would be a matter of interest to all parts of London. The moral of the present position was this: that the nearer to the workhouse the more stringent was the exaction of rates from the poor ratepayers. High rates meant high rents, and high rents led to overcrowding of tenants, and that meant unhealthy surroundings, disorderly conduct, poverty, disease, immorality, and crime. High rates meant labour handicapped, hopes and the spirit of thrift blighted, enterprise crushed. It was one of the most painful duties devolving upon him in his magisterial capacity to periodically hear summonses for non-payment of rates and to see how the small shopkeepers and tradesmen—and those who let lodgings were in increasing numbers—requiring relief from the burdens of taxation and drawing nearer and nearer to the borders of the union. The Government

had promised in the Queen's Speech to give more complete power to the County Council. They were delighted to hear in the early part of the week from the Treasury Bench the promise given of the unification of London government, which would mean the getting rid of the dual control in the Metropolis. He wanted them now to give a third promise. He wanted them to promise to carry out this Resolution in spirit, if not in the letter. While giving Home Rule, peace, and contentment to 5,000,000 of Irish people, would they also add peace and comfort and justice to the 5,000,000 inhabitants of London? He thanked the House for the indulgent attention accorded to him, and would close his remarks by simply formally moving the Resolution.

Amendment proposed,

To leave out from the word "That," to the end of the Question, in order to add the words "provision ought to be made for further equalising the rates throughout the Metropolis,"—  
(*Mr. Barrow.*)

—instead thereof.

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question."

**MR. JAMES STUART** (Shoreditch, Hoxton) said, the hon. Member who had just opened the Debate on this difficult question with so much lucidity had brought forward a number of specimens of the inequalities of the rating which they condemned. There was no doubt that what the hon. Gentleman had said was strictly correct as to the contest in March in regard to the London County Council having been fought mainly on the question of the rating of London. The same question, it would be admitted, was one of the principal questions before Londoners at the time of the General Election itself. London suffered from great anomalies. It suffered anomalies because of the method of its growth, and perhaps the greatest anomaly was that of the incidence of its rates. They had had several points before them in connection with this matter, which he only mentioned to put aside. The Resolution before the House did not refer to that wider issue of the alteration of the incidence or class of persons on whom the taxation was to fall. There was a Bill before them which would render discussion on that subject at the present time

*Mr. Barrow*

irregular in connection with the taxation of ground values. As to the question of assessment, he did not mention it for any other purpose than simply to put it one side—or to deal with it in conjunction with the subject of inequalities which were of a character that bore most heavily on the poorer districts. Whatever the reason, some of the richer districts were considerably under-assessed, and they hoped to bring before the House a Bill for the correction of the assessment of London. But what they had to do this evening was to deal with a totally different question—namely, the incidence of the rates in one locality as compared with another locality. He would not make the bold assertion that in other towns there was no inequality between one part and another. That question he would turn to in one moment; but in London the inequality was of a more remarkable kind—and not only that, but it was of an order entirely different. It had this peculiarity that where the people were poor the rating was high, and where the rich dwelt it was correspondingly low. That was general throughout London. In the poorest district of London, Mile End New Town, the rateable value per head of the population was only £2 13s. 1d. and the rate was 6s. 11d., the point at which it generally stood; while in St. James's, Westminster, one of the wealthiest districts, the rateable value was £30 per head, and the rates were only 4s. 2d. in the £1. Rateable value per head was taken as the fairest test of the riches or poverty of a district. He hoped the House would consider the general aspect of the matter. The average rate of London was 5s. in the £1, and there were 41 poorer parishes which had, without exception, a higher rate than the average. And it was a remarkable fact that of the 42 parishes in London which had a rateable value per head below the average, 41 had rates above the average, and only one had rates below the average. Nor was this all. The rates of the poorer parishes he had mentioned were not merely a little, but very much, above the average—as high as 7s. in some cases and 6s. 11d. in others. On the other side there were nine large and rich parishes in which the rateable value was £28 per head, and in every one of these the rates were below 5s., varying from

4s. 2d. to 4s. 11d. In other districts anomalies existed to a greater or less extent. Let them now glance at other centres of large population. In Nottingham and Norwich, for instance, inequalities in the rating of different districts of those places had arisen recently through local circumstances, but the anomalies were trifling in comparison with those that existed in London. What were the methods by which those other towns had remedied, or proposed to remedy, the evil? They did so by means of a Private Bill. London, however, was under the great disadvantage that it was not permitted, by the Standing Orders of the House, to take this course, and, consequently, the Members for London were compelled to bring the grievance before Parliament. They had no other means of obtaining redress. This was a remarkable instance of the manner in which the hands of the great Governing Body of London were tied in matters in which they certainly ought to be free. The origin of the difficulty lay in this: that London, in the process of growth, had absorbed a great number of separate communities, which had their own poor and rich residents and were governed by their own Vestries. When the reform of London government took place, the Vestry was made the Governing Body, and the rates imposed in the districts remained in the hands of the Vestries, so far as municipal purposes were concerned. The growth of London had been accompanied by a great change within the limits of those various districts. Some of them had become the homes of the poor alone, and others of the rich alone, and, the reform not going on along with growth, one of the results was that the poor were highly rated while the rich were not. In particular rates for local purposes the anomalies were very great and very unjust to the poor. Much had been done in connection with the equalisation of the poor rate, the amount raised in London for the relief of the poor—about £1,750,000. Of that amount all that affected the indoor poor and other charges was raised by a common rate of 8d. over London. Another amount of nearly £500,000 was equalised by the Local Government Act of 1888. The poor rate, however, was not completely equalised. He wished to call attention

not to the poor rate, but to those local burdens which were municipal in their character, and which included the sewers, lighting, roads, scavenging, and all sanitary work, the expenses of administration, and the payment of debt. These reached a total of £2,000,000, and the incidence was very unequal. In Bethnal Green it was 16½d. per head; in Camberwell, 18½d.; in Lambeth, 18½d.; in St. George's-in-the-East, 22½d.; and in Greenwich, 23d. Among the rich parishes, St. James's paid 8½d. per head; Kensington, 14d.; Paddington, 12d.; and St. George's, Hanover Square, 9d. He could show the inequality by the contrast between one of the poorest parishes—Bethnal Green, and one of the richest—St. George's, Hanover Square. In the former the rateable value per head was £3 5s. 11d., and in the latter £28; while Bethnal Green was nearly double St. George's in population, and had a total rateable value of only £425,000, as against £1,848,000. In 1890 Bethnal Green spent £1,400 on sewers, and St. George's, Hanover Square, which had the same length of streets, spent £3,600. The rate in Bethnal Green was nearly 1d.; that in St. George's was only ½d. On street lighting Bethnal Green spent £3,300, representing a rate of 1½d., and St. George's £9,400, representing a rate of a little more than 1d. If ever there were a matter of common interest in a Municipality it was the street lighting, for it affected the police rate, the poor rate, and a large number of expenses common to the whole of London. On the maintenance of the roads, paving and cleaning, Bethnal Green spent £11,000 and St. George's £36,000. Of that which was called the road expenditure of the parishes of London, amounting to close upon £900,000 a year, very nearly a half was for the sanitation of roads. On the removal of dust and refuse, on which the health of all London depended, Bethnal Green spent £3,300, representing a rate of nearly 2d., and St. George's spent £4,800, representing a rate of ½d. If they wanted a case for establishing a greater equality of the rates, the figures he had given made out such a case. The cost for lighting and common sanitary work came to about £900,000 per annum over the whole town; and if all the expense of managing that common work were added, the total would be

raised to considerably over £1,000,000. There were precedents for the equalisation which he ventured to urge upon the wisdom of the House. In the first place, they had certain annual rates all over London, which were managed by Central Authorities such as the School Board and the County Council. That was the method by which the Metropolitan Common Poor Fund was managed. He should mention that the first method applied to something like £3,000,000, the second method to £1,000,000, and the third method to £500,000. The third method, which was adopted in the Act of 1888, was that a common rate was raised by a Central Body and distributed amongst the Local Bodies in proportion to their poor. A very great advantage was got in London from a certain amount of central administration, but a very great advantage was got, too, from a certain amount of local administration, and what they had got to do in London was to combine the two—certain subjects being more fitted for central administration, other subjects being more fitted for local administration. The ultimate relations between the Central Bodies and the District Bodies would be settled by a Bill which he hoped they would soon have—the London District Government Bill; but there was no necessity whatever for waiting for that Bill in order to carry out that equalisation of rates which partook of the character of a grant in aid, which was common all over the country—in London as well as outside London. In order that the method arrived at might be the proper one, there were only two possible suggestions really worth the consideration of the House. The first was, that the distribution of the rate should be in accordance with population. It was obvious that the rate raised according to rateable value and distributed according to population would exactly meet the needs of those poor parishes which were at present mulcted in high rates and whose poverty was a source of danger to the whole City. He did not venture to dictate to the House as to which of the methods he had indicated should be adopted, though he had a predilection for the third method—that of imposing an equal rate which could be distributed in aid of Local Bodies, because he thought it was

the simplest method and the easiest reform to carry out. No one could say that redistribution which he advocated was taking from the rich—at the expense of the rich—and giving to the poor. It was carrying out the idea that London sanitation was a matter of common concern; it was carrying out the idea that London was a town or community of existence, and it was carrying out the precedent that had been established year after year for the last 30 years. Now, what would be the practical result of carrying into effect the scheme he proposed for the equalisation of a certain rate, and its distribution according to population? In the case of Mile End New Town the rates would be reduced from 6s. 11d. to 5s. 7d., while in the case of St. George's, Hanover Square, the rates would be raised from 4s. 5½d. to 5s. 10½d. Therefore, the rise in the rates in wealthy parishes would be less than the fall in the rate in the poorer parishes. Again, taking the parish of Bethnal Green, the rates which now stood at 6s. in the £1 would be reduced to 5s.; and in St. George's, Hanover Square, the rates which now stood at 4s. 5½d. would be raised to 4s. 10½d. The change he had indicated would be general throughout London. The result would be an approximation to a more equal rating, and it would be an approximation also to that common burden which justly ought to be borne by the whole of London consistently with the Central Authority and the peculiarities of Local Vestries. He had had to deal with what he feared had been a tiresome mass of figures. But the House should remember that, though the figures might have been uninteresting, they were the very life-blood of some of the poor people of London. These figures were well understood throughout the poor districts of London; they went into the hearts and minds of the inhabitants of these districts—hard-working and poverty-stricken people in many cases—and in these figures lay their hope largely for a better state of things. He urged this question upon the Government and upon the House, reminding both that it was not a claim for additional powers for the London County Council in the hope that that being so, the opposite might lay aside any objection by to that Body and view

the matter in an unprejudiced light. They had to deal with a question that lay entirely between the various districts of London; it was a question that had nothing at all to do with the County Council, but dealt with one of the most urgent reforms that the great town of London was confronted with. Some dealing with London taxation was an urgent necessity. He could say, on behalf of his colleagues in the representation of London, that they were unanimously of opinion that the reform which they pressed on the attention of the House was most urgent; that it had the great merit in the present state of Public Business that it could be embodied in a very short measure, and that it was also foundation precedents in London itself. It assimilated London rates to those of other large towns—a fact which should appeal for support to hon. Members from the country; it assimilated them in an essential manner, and it brought relief to London where relief was most needed.

\*MR. ALBAN G. H. GIBBS (London) said, he would not have taken part in this Debate—being a new Member—were it not for the attack made by the hon. Gentleman who had just spoken on the City of London, which he had the honour of representing. He begged to say that their objection to being taken over by the County Council lay far deeper than on any mere question of the equalisation of the rates. The hon. Gentleman had told them that the Government had promised him the unification of London. He believed the Government had only promised a Commission to inquire, and he and his colleagues in the representation of London would have many opportunities of expressing their opinion on that subject before the time came for action, if it ever did come. In May of 1889 a Debate took place in the House on a somewhat similar subject to that which was now under consideration—a proposal to unify certain parts of the poor rate. Many difficulties were shown to exist in the way of the proposal at that time; and he did not think the hon. Member had in any way removed these difficulties. He had expected that they would have had a great deal more stress laid upon the efficiency and the economy that would be

induced by this proposed change. As he had tried his best to follow the hon. Member as to the means by which he proposed to effect this unification, he had to say that he had entirely failed in grasping them. It seemed to him that it should be done in one of two ways—either the County Council must do everything and leave nothing whatever to the Vestries, the Boards of Guardians, or whatever Local Authorities Parliament would still allow to exist in the land, or else the Guardians or the Vestries must spend the money, and the County Council pay for it. He did not think there was anything like economy or efficiency in the scheme by which one Body would spend the money and another supply it. In the old Proprietary Clubs it was the fashion for all members to dine together, and it was the fashion for the spirited proprietor to give a grant in aid, in the way of paying for four dinners to assist in the economy of the performance. They had in that a system of the equalisation of rates; every member ordered all the wine he wanted for himself and the others paid for it, but it was found that the system did not lead to much retrenchment or economy, and so it was discontinued. Another reason had been advanced by the Mover of the Amendment in its support—it was a reason he had heard also advanced for the dismemberment of the Empire and the dismemberment of the Church, and that was that local opinion favoured it. The hon. Gentleman had not said how he had ascertained that local opinion favoured it, except it was through the medium of the County Council. Now, they had a very high authority which they were all bound to respect, and which hon. Members opposite were bound to follow—he meant the authority of the Prime Minister, who had on the previous night enunciated the following principle: “I have an old Parliamentary habit of looking to the statutory representation of a country as the proper, legitimate, and organised expression of public opinion.” Now, had the constitutional Representatives of the Metropolis—namely, the Metropolitan Members of Parliament, or anything like a majority of them, expressed any opinion in favour of this change? He thought not; and he did not think that even the hon. Member opposite thought so, for he had considered it



better to appeal to the Provincial Members to aid him in getting his scheme adopted. This matter was thoroughly argued in 1889. The House then decided by a large majority not to proceed with it, and he trusted they would decide in the same way again.

\*MR. T. H. BOLTON (St. Pancras, N.) said, if there were an equalisation of rates throughout London the people of the borough of St. Pancras would still pay about the same rate in the pound as they were paying now. Therefore, he could bring a disinterested judgment to bear upon the Motion. He did not think anybody would, in principle, deny the injustice of charging on one portion of the City a heavier rate than another part for purposes really common to the whole City, and there were a great number of purposes common to the people of London that ought to be provided for out of a common fund borne by the whole City, and this had been asserted and acted upon by the House over and over again. The common poor fund to which the hon. Member for Shoreditch (Mr. J. Stuart) had referred showed that the House had made some provision for the equalisation of rates for purposes which they considered common to the whole City. The question now before the House was whether that principle which had been so asserted and acted upon should be pushed further—whether there ought to be a further equalisation of rates in the Metropolis. Speaking as a man who had had some little experience of Local Government in London, he believed that the principle could be extended, but he was free to admit that the extension of that principle brought with it considerations of a very much larger character. If representation and taxation went together, the people from whom the money was raised should control the expenditure of it. A rate raised throughout the whole of London should, more or less, have to be controlled by a Central Authority, and should be used for purposes that were essentially common to the whole City. There were matters at present in the hands of Local Authorities which could be better controlled by some Central Authority, and there were a good many things controlled by a Central Authority which might be much better managed by Local Authorities, and, therefore, when the Government came to deal with this

question thoroughly, they would have to consider the policy of readjustment of control as well as of readjustment of taxation. Dealing with a Common Fund was very easy. At Boards of Guardians when a proposal was made to raise the salary of an officer which came out of the Common Poor Fund, the Guardians, liking the officer personally and anxious to reward him, often said, "What does it matter? it comes out of the Common Poor Fund." That was the danger that necessarily existed in allowing Local Authorities to spend money out of a Common Fund raised over a large area—in effect, to spend money raised outside their own district. If the entire expenditure of London came from a common fund, it would have to be entrusted to a Central Authority, and he doubted whether a Central Authority could efficiently and economically control the expenditure in so vast and varied a community as the Metropolis. At present 3s. 3d. out of the 5s. 4d. average rate of London in various ways came from a Common Fund, but the expenditure of that Common Fund was tied down by very strict rules, and the Local Authorities had very little control over it. If the House extended the principle and brought in the remaining 2s. 1d. of the rate, they would have to still further restrict the power of the Local Authorities. The question was whether the principle of the Common Poor Fund and the equalisation of rates could be extended further. He thought there were some things that ought to be got out of a Common Fund, but he was not an advocate for the complete transfer of all burdens to a Common Fund, because he saw in it the destruction of local control, which was essential to economy. Take the Poor Law as an example. Indoor relief and part of the office and other charges were paid out of the Common Poor Fund; but outdoor relief was a local matter, provided for out of local rates and under the direct control of the Guardians. Now if they placed the outdoor charge on the Common Poor Fund and handed over the management to a Central Board they would at once destroy that personal interest which the Guardians now take in the individual persons who received relief, and destroy also that local control and management which was essential to effective and economical out-

door relief. Therefore, in any extension of this principle of equalising rates in London the Government would have to consider how far it could be carried; so that while giving relief to local burdens there should be a margin left for the control of Local Authorities, which would stimulate them to exercise judgment and discretion. The question of lighting had been mentioned. The borough of St. Pancras had embarked on a large experiment with regard to electric lighting. They were one of the few communities in London who were determined to take the question of lighting into their own hands, and they had raised £100,000 for an installation in one part of the district. But was that to be transferred to a Common Poor Fund? Were the people throughout London willing to bear the risk of that experiment, and to contribute to the special lighting of a portion of the borough of St. Pancras? Were the people of St. Pancras not to reap the benefit of their enterprise, assuming this installation to turn out a success? He doubted, also, whether the principle of the Common Poor Fund could be practically applied to sewerage in relation to building speculations in new neighbourhoods. He was surprised to hear his hon. Friend appeal for sympathy to the President of the Local Government Board in asking for grants in aid. If there was one man in the House who had denounced the bad policy of grants in aid that man was the right hon. Gentleman. He did not think they could do much in the matter in the shape of grants in aid. When the Government dealt with District Councils, as he trusted they would in London before long, if not in this Session in the next, he hoped they would consider the policy of discriminating between the expenditure which was to be put on the whole of London and the expenditure which was to be raised locally. He admitted that it appeared hard that some of the rich parishes should escape to the extent they did, and that some of the poor parishes should be punished to the extent he knew they were, and therefore he would not object to some safe extension of the principle favoured by the hon. Member as a temporary expedient, and he believed it would be a relief which would be appreciated by the people; but above

all this must be borne in mind the policy of keeping the expenditure of the money under the control of the people who paid it, and of dividing the work between Central and District Authorities, with a view to keeping the government and finance of London on safe and sound lines.—[*Cheers.*]

\*MR. B. L. COHEN (Islington, E.) said, he noticed that the hon. Mover and Seconder of the Resolution laid great emphasis on what they described as a cardinal and crucial question which they said was especially before their constituents when they returned such a large number of Progressive members to the London County Council. He believed it was true that the success of those candidates for the London County Council was due, to a great extent, to the promises which those colleagues of his gave, that they would do what they could—though he thought it was very little—in that arena so to vary the incidence of taxation that it would fall in a different way to what it did at present. But he wished to point out that there was a very great difference between varying the incidence of taxation and arguing for the equalisation of rates. This question had been a little obscured by its having been presented to the House as a question between rich and poor. It was by no means a question between rich and poor. The Return which was presented to Parliament in June last year, on the Motion of the Member for Bethnal Green, showed that the rates did not at all vary according to wealth and poverty. He found that the rates for Hammer-smith and Fulham—not very poor districts—were 6s. 3d., or within 1d. of the highest amount; whereas the rates for Mile End Old Town and Lambeth were 5s. 9d. and 5s. 10d., and Clerkenwell 5s. 4d. He was not concerned to deny that there was a very considerable discrepancy between the amount of the various rates; but he thought that before Parliament committed itself to such a drastic proposal as was involved in the Resolution, it was well to see what had been the causes which had contributed to these various discrepancies in the rates. He found from the Return that the total value of rates levied in the Metropolis during the year ending 25th March, 1891, was £8,406,414 on a total rate-

able value of £31,630,017, or an average rate of nearly 5s. 4d. in the £1. Looking into the figures still further, he found there were 13 out of the 27 districts which were above the average, 12 below the average, and two whose rates were exactly the average. The margins above and below the average were considerable; but when he inquired into the causes of the discrepancies, he found they furnished of themselves the strongest possible argument against the Resolution. The causes were almost entirely those which they were justified in describing as being absolutely within the control of the Local Bodies. To give an example. Taking the parishes of Lambeth and Mile End, he found that their total rating was practically identical for the purposes of calculations, respectively 5s. 10d. and 5s. 9d. in the £1; but while there was a discrepancy of only 1d., the poor rate for Lambeth was 3s. 7d., and for Mile End it was only 3s. 3d. He cited that in order to show that whilst there was a difference of 4d. in the £1 in the poor rate of the parishes of Lambeth and Mile End, there was a difference of only 1d. in the total rating, showing clearly that the amounts spent on what he might call local reforms—lighting, paving, street cleaning, and other expenses—were those which were entirely within the control of the particular local administration, and which would be very lavishly and irresponsibly administered if complete equalisation were to be sanctioned for one moment. As regarded the poor rate, a great contribution towards the equalisation of the charge for the poor was made by the Local Government Act of 1888, which provided for a contribution of 4d. per day per head for each indoor pauper, payable out of the county rate. The effect of the payment of that county rate had been towards the equalisation of the rates. In the parish of St. George's-in-the-East the contribution from the London County Council for paupers was 12d. in the £1, owing to the large number of poor, while in the City of London it was only 4d. in the £1, owing to the small number of poor. The result of the discrepancy was that the county rate levied in the City of London was 12½d., whilst the rate levied in St. George's-in-the-East was a trifle less than

*Mr. B. L. Cohen*

1½d. So much for the statistical portion of the case; there remained the ethical or, perhaps, the equitable aspect of the question. The House might be aware that the incidence of local taxation formed the subject of a most able Report by the Local Government and Taxation Committee of the London County Council, presented to the Council in November, 1891, by Lord Hobhouse, who laid it down that local needs should be met, to a large extent, out of the value of local property, and that the persons who receive the benefit of local property should contribute to the local needs each his fair share. With that wholesome canon he respectfully agreed, but he thought the House would see that the Resolution directly violated it. Besides the equitable aspect of the question, as laid down by Lord Hobhouse, there was also an economic point of view, powerfully emphasised by the Member for St. Pancras, who last addressed the House. If there be any divisions of the County of London which were economically administered, they would have a stimulus to extravagance; and if there be any which were extravagant, they would have the pressure withdrawn, which would influence them to be economical. Finally, he came to the question of who was to be the Body upon whom was to be cast the duty, and the responsibility of levying this rate. He imagined they would be told it was the London County Council, of which he had had the honour to be a member since it was first instituted. He dared say it would undertake that duty; he never knew it refuse to undertake anything. The profession of "undertaker" was one which it particularly cultivated. But was it wise to concentrate this vast duty on one Body, be it ever so powerful or able, and was this the moment to legislate in the direction of such undue centralisation? They bore in mind the measure promised in the Queen's Speech dealing with District and Parish Councils, and the Prime Minister told them on the first night of the Debate on the Address that great expectations were formed concerning those Local Bodies. But the hon. Member who moved the Resolution could not share those expectations, as the Resolution went to deprive them of their first and chief duty, that of controlling the expenditure

and levying the rate in the district they would govern. Were it not that they were accustomed to inconsistency in the Party opposite, he should say that one of the most astonishing features of this Debate was that a Resolution such as they were debating, which, above all others, was opposed to and almost subversive of Home Rule, should be supported by the opposite side. He believed the principle of Local Government in its truest, wisest, broadest, and safest sense, was attacked by the Resolution which was now under consideration, and which he sincerely hoped would be rejected by a decisive majority.

MR. W. SAUNDERS (Newington, Walworth) said, that in adjusting the incidence of taxation in London it would be necessary to consider not merely what was equitable between one district and another, but also what was equitable between one ratepayer and another in the same district. It was in those inequalities between ratepayers that the greatest evil resulted. If hon. Members who resided in the metropolitan area would consult the valuation lists in their own parishes they would find incidence that would surprise them. In his own parish a millionaire who enjoyed 10 acres of land around his house as gardens and pleasure ground was rated for those 10 acres, which were worth £2,000 per acre, at £40 per annum, whereas a man of business, occupying two-thirds of an acre of land around his house in an adjoining locality, was rated at £60 for that portion of land. The hon. Member for East Islington told the House that this was not a question between the rich and the poor. He would, indeed, it were not so. But how could the hon. Member explain such facts as he would now bring before him? An owner of 30 or 40 acres of land in his parish died, and the land around his house had been purchased by the Artisans' Dwellings Company. During the owner's life it was rated at £4 per acre, but the moment it came into the possession of the working classes that identical land was rated, in addition to the value of the building, at £80 per acre. There could be no Member of the House who would not desire to adjust inequalities of that kind, and he sincerely hoped there would be cordial co-operation between Her Majesty's Government and the London County Council in re-

ference to this matter. The London County Council thought it their duty to examine the lists which were made at the last Quinquennial Valuation, and most surprising facts came under their notice. They discovered that the under-assessments, mostly of large properties in London, amounted to £2,000,000; so that, at the present moment, the poorer ratepayers of London were paying £10,000 a week, or £500,000 a year in consequence of the under-assessments of very large properties. Those properties consisted, to a very large extent, of mansions; but he might mention that the Bank of England was enormously under-rated, and nearly all the property of the City Companies in London was rated very far below what it ought to be. The County Council had been opposed at every turn, and the action they had taken had resulted mainly in enormous benefit to the lawyers. This was a case in which they wanted the assistance of the Government. They saw large properties under-assessed and small properties fully rated. A case was brought under his notice this week by a Member of this House, who explained to him that a mansion of very great cost was rated at £2,100 per annum, whereas a factory in the same district, which cost far less than the mansion, was rated at £29,000. These were inequalities which they wanted to adjust, and he believed that by the hearty co-operation of the Government and the County Council the adjustment, so far as the Metropolis was concerned, might very properly and easily be made.

MR. BANBURY (Camberwell, Peckham) said, the hon. Member who had just sat down had made a speech which was really directed to assessments and not to inequality of rating. Supposing that this proposal was carried, and the Government lent their authority to some such measure as was indicated in the Motion, the inequalities which the hon. Gentleman had mentioned would not be altered, but the assessments would remain exactly the same. This was a question which had nothing to do with rich and poor, although he was very sorry to say that the speeches, with the exception of that of the hon. Member for St. Pancras, had all been in the nature of an attack upon the rich. This was simply a question of business, and

that being so he ventured to think that the old Liberal maxim that taxation should go with representation was one to which they should give due consideration. In order to carry out that maxim they would have to create some Central Authority, and that was the reason, he supposed, why they had heard nothing from hon. Gentlemen opposite as to this Central Authority because the aim of the Government and its supporters was decentralisation and not centralisation. One of the great remedies for agricultural distress which had been suggested by one of the Members of the Government in a speech delivered some time ago was Parish Councils. He did not himself think that Parish Councils would do much to improve the position of the farmer. If they were going to establish Parish Councils the first thing they ought not to do was to take the power of raising money and the rules out of their hands. Supposing this measure should come about, what would be the result? Poor parishes would be able to spend a large sum of money over which the people who provided that money would have no control whatever. He contended that directly they took the control of the purse out of the hands of the people who provided the money, and put it into the hands of the people who did not provide the money, not only waste and extravagance, but even perhaps corruption would ensue.

\*SIR J. BLUNDELL MAPLE (Camberwell, Dulwich) thought every Member on his side of the House who sat for the Metropolis would agree that if it was possible, without injustice, to give a benefit to the poor districts by the equalisation of rates it should be done. But how they were to do so was another question. They knew very well that as regarded the poor rate there was little or nothing to complain about. They knew that matters such as fire brigade expenses, registration fees, compensation to officers, vaccination fees, &c., and all subjects nearly, came out of the common purse, except matters of lighting, dust, and sewers. Nearly all other subjects were already equalised. Now, in St. Pancras they had a very large electric light installation for the supply of all who desired it, and for lighting the streets. Did hon. Members propose to hand over

*Mr. Banbury*

the lighting to the London County Council? Would not Bethnal Green and Shoreditch want to be lighted by the electric light? Where were they going to stop? Again, there was the question of the paving of the streets. They could afford in St. Pancras to levy an extra rate for wood paving; but if there was a common fund, every back street in London would be asking to be paved with wood, and there would be no limit to the extravagance of the City as a whole. He believed that the Vestries in London and the Boards of Guardians did their best to manage the affairs of the different localities, and, generally speaking, they did it most satisfactorily. But if it was nobody's business and nobody's responsibility to look after the rates, extravagance would exist in all quarters. He had been looking through the expenditure of the different localities for 1891. He found that even in the locality of Bethnal Green they were most generous. They gave to the Vestry clerk, for instance, £700 a year, whereas in Chelsea they gave their Vestry clerk £515 per year. If the whole of the rates of London, however, were to go into one common bag, they all knew what would be the result. Vestry clerks would then none of them get less than £1,000 a year to begin with, with a large increasing scale. He was sure it was not necessary the House should be detained much longer with this question. They were all unanimous in regard to the general terms in which this Resolution was drawn; and they on that side of the House were not opposed to any equalisation of rates provided that that equalisation or contribution towards equalisation was done in such a way as not to bring discredit or injustice upon any class of the community.

\*THE PRESIDENT OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. H. H. FOWLER, Wolverhampton, E.): Mr. Speaker, I shall only interpose for a very few minutes between the House and the decision which it wishes to arrive at. The hon. Member who has just sat down rather startled me by winding up with saying that all agreed in accepting the principle of the Resolution, although his speech was, in fact, couched in terms to show that the Resolution was impracticable and impossible. I should like the House

to understand that, so far as the words upon the Paper are concerned, and I think so far as the intentions of the Mover and Seconder of the Resolution were fully explained, this proposal has nothing whatever to do with the Poor Law. We need not trouble our heads about the management of the Poor Law in the Metropolis, about a Common Poor Fund, or about the mode in which the wealthy parishes in the Metropolis do undoubtedly contribute in aid of the poor parishes. But I should be slow not to recognise the value of the existing present system and not to recognise the value of what my predecessor did in 1888 for the Poor Law, when he made a grant of 4d. per head towards the poor of the Metropolis, which I think most just and fair. Just let me ask the House in one sentence what the principle of the Resolution is? The principle of the Resolution is that London is one great city, one community, one municipality, having common interests, and therefore liable to common burdens for the discharge of common duties. It is no question as between rich and poor, but the principle which my hon. Friend wishes the House to adopt is that there shall be a community of burdens in London in the same manner—they do not even ask to the same extent, but in the same manner—as exists in all other Municipalities. Hon. Members opposite have dealt with roads and lighting as if the proposition was that there was to be one common purse out of which all the streets of London were to be paved with wood, no matter what the locality; and all lighted with electricity, no matter what the requirements might be. If it were so, that would be a proposition open to severe criticism, but that is not the proposition of London Members at all. What they have based their case upon is the principle that London is one; and let me tell the House, as the responsible Minister for Health in this country, it is of vital importance to St. George's, Hanover Square, and St. George's-in-the-East that they should be as one. You cannot draw a cordon between the rich and the poor in that sense. It is our common interest that the health of London should be equally safeguarded, to say nothing of our duty to those

whose capital consists in their health and nothing else, that they should have that fair contribution which the whole community can give, in order to preserve that state of health. The state of things in London which is now complained of has grown up from the gradual aggregation of London, and from the sad neglect of this House and of Parliament in not giving to London that self-government and those municipal institutions which every other part of the Kingdom possesses. I quite agree that London should have a distinct as well as a general system of government; and if the present Government remain responsible for the affairs of the country, I have no doubt they will submit a scheme for the complete unification of London, and also a system for distributing amongst the various localities of London those separate powers of administration which are best administered in localities for efficiency and economy. This principle is no new principle. Already we have £8,000,000 of taxation in London, £5,000,000 of which are already administered upon the principle criticised to-day, and if it is good for £5,000,000 why should it not be good for the £3,000,000? There is no complaint of extravagance from the present principle. One hon. Gentleman has drawn a terrible picture of the result of a common fund, and of the County Council handing out money to localities regardless of requirements. That is not the principle upon which the House is asked to proceed or which prevails at present. Let us deal with the case of a Common Poor Fund. There is no handing round of a certain sum of money to each locality. What the Local Government Board does is this: They ascertain what is the entire amount necessary to be produced for the whole of London, and what that represents at a rate of so much in the £1. They say to one parish, say St. George's, Hanover Square, for instance, your contribution ought to be so much, your share out of the fund so much, and you hand over to the Local Government Board—which is a sort of Clearing House—the difference, if against you, so much. If St. George's-in-the-East, or the other side of London, is on the other side of the account, they have to receive so much, and, therefore, there is no handing out of money out of the

Common Fund, but simply a Clearing House arrangement, so to speak, of local taxation which continues to be administered locally in the manner for which hon. Gentlemen contend. So far as the Government are concerned, I say frankly we accept the principle of this Resolution. We believe the time has arrived for a further equalisation of rating. We pledge ourselves to no machinery; we pledge ourselves to no details. I do not disguise from the House that this is a very difficult question properly, completely, and satisfactorily to work out. Perhaps I may not be considered guilty of egotism if I say that at this moment I am at work on this question. I am endeavouring to consider it in all its bearings, and the House will admit that I have a good deal on my shoulders just now, whilst I am sure the London Members will afford me that consideration which I think I have a right to claim. I will proceed with this matter as rapidly as I possibly can, and I will endeavour to prepare a scheme which will stand the test of criticism and which will carry out what they desire without inflicting any injustice upon any locality. That, shortly and simply, is the case I wish to put to the House. I think it is very unnecessary to introduce into a question of this sort those clap-trap remarks about sewers which came from a certain section of the House. We have our Party conflicts; but when you come to deal with the administration of the great Metropolis of London, when you are dealing with the carrying out of that administration on fair, equitable, and just grounds, I am sure the present Government are entitled to claim the credit of being actuated by honest and straightforward intentions in their policy which we, on our part, never denied to the late Government. I do not accept the view of the hon. Member for the City at all. I say the principle he has laid down is in direct antagonism to the principle that has prevailed in every other Municipality in the world—the principle that a Municipality is one and has common interests, and that those common interests are best served by an equal distribution of the burdens, and having the expenditure under proper central and local control. We accept that principle, and we think the time has arrived for its further development. The details will

require most careful consideration. It is not necessary to assert that there will be either injustice, extravagance, or an imaginary raising of salary all round. All these things are trivial and unworthy of the Debate, and, so far as the London County Council was concerned, I think it was very unfair to them, because if they have erred at all in reference to the remuneration of their servants, it has not been an error in the direction of extravagance. I think no Public Body, in London or elsewhere, has administered that part of the machinery with a greater regard to economy than the London County Council. But that, perhaps, is beside the question. My hon. Friend does not ask us to accept the principle that anything is to be handed over to the London County Council. No increase of power is to be conferred upon them, therefore that terribly abused Body may be left out of consideration. He asks the House to accept the principle—broad, clear, and distinct—that there ought to be a further equalisation of rating in the Metropolis. If the House accepts that principle, it will then become the duty of the responsible Government of the day to consider what is the wisest and best mode of carrying out that proposition.

\*MR. LONG (Liverpool, West Derby): Mr. Speaker, I will not detain the House for long, but I would like to say a few words on this very important subject. The matter is one that requires to be considered with extreme care, and should receive the attention of the Government. I am glad to notice that the right hon. Gentleman opposite has done justice to the arguments which have been addressed to the House from this side, and it is satisfactory to know that the Government are personally looking into the whole subject. I think, and I understand, that if this Resolution be adopted, they will consider themselves bound to do what they can to give proper and just effect to its terms. I am anxious to congratulate my hon. Friends of the Unionist Party upon the fact that this Debate has produced one or two important admissions from gentlemen opposite. The right hon. Gentleman, in referring to the work that was done by the late Government, did not altogether follow the views that we have heard in the country. We were told in the country that an enormous

sum was given by the late Government to the landlords. Yet to-night we find the right hon. Gentleman opposite, the head of the Local Government Board, and a responsible Minister, stating that it is the intention of the Government to follow somewhat similar lines to those of the late Government, and reminding the House that the late Government gave large sums in relief of rates. It is now admitted that the question of rating is not one for landlords alone; it is one for tenants and landlords. This is the first time we have been told that we have done anything for the working classes, and we welcome this tardy admission. [Mr. H. H. FOWLER dissented.] I am not referring to the right hon. Gentleman, who dissents, but to the hon. Members behind him, who stated in the country that we never did anything for the wage earners, but devoted all our attention to the landlords. We have heard the views expressed this evening with great gratification indeed; and I only wish hon. Gentlemen would speak outside this House as they do in it. I have only to add that we on this side accept the principle of this Resolution. We have no intention of dividing the House upon it. We cordially and heartily endorse the spirit in which the right hon. Gentleman has met the Resolution.

MR. PICKERSGILL (Bethnal Green, S.W.) said, the subject of the Resolution was one in which he had taken a great interest, and he could not avoid expressing his pleasure at the attitude of the right hon. Gentleman who spoke for the Government. The speech would be read with great satisfaction by the ratepayers of London. But they would be anxious to know when something was to be done to relieve them from the burdens under which they suffered. He hoped the right hon. Gentleman would be able to complete his scheme and introduce a Bill during the present Session.

Question put, and negatived.

Words added.

Main Question, as amended, put, and agreed to.

Resolved, That provision ought to be made for further equalising the rates throughout the Metropolis.

Resolved, That this House will immediately resolve itself into the Committee of Supply.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair."

#### TEACHERS' SUPERANNUATION (STATE AID).

\*SIR R. TEMPLE (Surrey, Kingston) moved the following Amendment:—

"That, in the opinion of this House, it is desirable that a National State-aided system of Superannuation for Teachers in Public Elementary Schools in England and Wales should be established at an early date."

He said he rose at an inconvenient hour, perhaps (8.40); but he also rose with some anxiety, because he knew how anxious a large number of persons were regarding the question, and he was conscious, also, of the intensity of the hope with which they regarded the proceedings of the House this evening, when in the terms of his Resolution he said "an early date" he did not mean to pledge the House to any particular time; and if there should be any objection to these words they could be easily omitted. The point was really to obtain the general sanction of the House to the principle, at least, of a scheme for the superannuation of teachers in England and Wales. It would be in the recollection of the House that very early in the Session he put a question to the Vice President of the Council who was the Minister for Education on this subject, and he was told that the matter was one of great importance, that it would involve a large expenditure of money, and that no hope could be held out that there would be time to deal with it during the present Session. He hoped that did not imply that the House was unprepared to take the great matter up when the time arrived.

Notice taken, that 40 Members were not present; House counted, and 40 Members being found present,

SIR R. TEMPLE said that, in spite of the answer he had received from the right hon. Gentleman, he trusted that the House would on this occasion acknowledge the general principle of the scheme without pledging itself to carry it into effect at any particular date. The



late Parliament appointed a Select Committee, which sat for two Sessions and acknowledged the principle, and he hoped and trusted that the present Parliament would accept the policy of its predecessor, because he must remind his Parliamentary comrades that if they expected that their authority would be acknowledged by their successors, they ought to show some respect for the authority of their predecessors. Now, the Select Committee appointed by the last Parliament, which was composed of Members carefully chosen from both sides of the House for their educational ability, sat for two consecutive Sessions. They took the evidence of the very best educationalists throughout the country. They consulted Mr. Sutton, the Government Actuary for the Friendly Societies, who was especially selected for that purpose, and he was glad to record his testimony of the value of Mr. Sutton's services and of the elaborate and exhaustive inquiry which that gentleman made. An elaborate Report was presented; the matter was worked out by the Members of the Committee by the sweat of their brows. The right hon. Gentleman the present head of the Education Department was a prominent Member of the Committee. Therefore he (Sir R. Temple) was introducing the subject under peculiarly favourable auspices. At this moment there were some 107,000 persons, including pupil teachers, engaged in elementary teaching, and they represented the teaching power for some 30,000 schools; but it was not to be supposed that all these persons came within the scheme, which was carefully limited to certificated teachers, who numbered 50,000 only, though that, indeed, was a number large enough. Now, these certificated teachers felt with the utmost anxiety that some superannuation scheme should be passed, and they were prepared to submit to very heavy sacrifices, or, at least, sacrifices which would be heavy to them. As regarded the policy of superannuating teachers, he might argue that there were personal reasons in favour of it, because these persons formed a most useful, meritorious, and interesting class. He hoped that the House would have pity upon their narrow circumstances, and extend a merciful consideration to

all their toils, cares, and anxieties. There was no class of persons who deserved better the favour of Parliament than they did. But there was a further and equally great reason—namely, a public and governmental policy, because it was well-known to all educationalists that, after a certain time of life the teacher man or woman, lost his or her mental alertness, brightness, and vivacity, and ceased to be as efficient a teacher as he or she once was. Consequently, there were complaints already rising, and, indeed, they had arisen in the past, regarding the deterioration of a large number of our teachers as they advanced in life through no fault whatever of their own. The difficulty was not so great 20 or 30 years ago, when our schools were hardly one-third of their present number; but now that our schools had multiplied all over the land, this difficulty was increasing, and would shortly affect seriously the efficiency of the schools and imperil their educational vigour. Therefore, if they were to maintain the teaching strength of their teaching staff, there must be some mode of superannuation, because it was impossible to discharge and throw upon the world the teachers as they advanced in life. Of course, it it would be said, "Why should not the teachers provide superannuation for themselves?" Well, in the first place, their salaries were, unhappily, small. The House would be surprised if he went into details and showed how many teachers received salaries less than £50, £60, £70, and £80 a year. It was an extraordinary instance of the cheapness of purely intellectual labour in this country as compared with manual and skilled labour. And they had the fact that whether the teachers as a body ought to do so or not—he did not say they would not, because he believed that they would if they could—they did not make provision for old age. In their case there was almost a total absence of such provision. That was a fact which could not be denied, and they might almost say that unless some provision were made by State intervention many of the teachers would be brought in penury to the grave. Thus there was a real necessity for State intervention, and of such intervention they had not to go far to seek for examples. He believed that in almost every other

nation on the Continent of Europe that had a system of State education had also a system of superannuation added to it. In England, whether it was a Department of the Government Service, or a firm, or large Corporation, or Company, they all had a system of this kind. The Education Department for England and Wales, in fact, was one of the few Departments that had gone on up to the present time destitute of a superannuation system. Having said so much by the way of general preface in favour of the scheme, he would in a few brief words explain the principles of the plan as proposed by the Select Committee which reported last Session. In the first place, they proposed a compulsory organisation—that was to say, an organisation which every future teacher must join. Then there was to be a subscription, of course, for the teachers and a subvention from the State. Two superannuation funds would consequently be established, one by the teachers and the other by the State. The one by the teachers would, of course, be managed by the Education Department, but, besides that, a second fund would be set up by the State itself. Though the system would be compulsory in the case of teachers appointed after a certain date, it would be optional as regarded existing teachers. It would be impossible to compel persons to enter a system who had not been engaged thereto on their entrance into the service. The subscriptions from existing teachers, as he would presently show, would be different to those from future teachers. The rate of subscription for the teachers would be reckoned at about 4 to 5 per cent. on their salaries. This would be a heavy rate considering the small salaries which were paid to the great majority of teachers. The subscriptions and the subvention together were expected to provide a pittance only for the lower-paid teachers, and a bare subsistence for those who were better paid. It would be found that the Government subvention offered to the teachers was but slight, though he admitted that it would prove costly on the whole. He did not conceal that from the House. Then as regarded the age of retirement, that would be made compulsory. The age proposed was really too late for educational proficiency, that was to say,

we should be retaining men and women in the service longer than they ought to stay if they were to teach with the energy he had already described. It was, no doubt, a hard condition for the teachers that they should be obliged to stay so long in the service in order to earn their pensions, but if we made the age earlier it would be too costly for the State, and would provide but too small a pension for the teachers. Nobody but those accustomed to actuarial figures could realise the difference which five years made when they got past 50 to the pension which a subscription would purchase, so they would propose an earlier age of retirement than the compulsory one, but that would be optional, and those who availed themselves of it would have to accept a reduced superannuation. Thus the two considerations would reflect one upon the other. To the teachers who would say that the provision they proposed was too low, they would say, "Ah, but look at the heavy cost involved to the State." To the House who might be inclined to murmur at the cost involved to the Treasury, he would reply, "Yes, but look at the narrowness of the provision which we have ventured to recommend." Thus these two considerations acted and reacted on each other, and one was justified by the other. He might add that they had not included in the scheme any provision for what was only too well known by the ominous name of "break-down." That was to say, they did not recommend any plan for those who were compelled to retire through ill-health through no fault of their own before the pensionable age. They had to their great regret found it difficult to make any such recommendation for this reason, that they could not reckon the cost. They had no actuarial data, and they hesitated to submit anything to the House which could not be justified in the presence of the Chancellor of the Exchequer. Besides, the Reference to the Committee was as to superannuation, and when they got to the question of a break-down they travelled beyond the limit of that Reference. Such were the main ideas which were in the minds of the Committee. They formed their scheme, in consultation with the Government actuary. He would now go into the business details, for hon. Members would at once say to

him, "All you have adduced is very fine in its way, the principles are undeniable, the groundwork is irrefragable, but what exactly do you propose; what are the rates and subscriptions; what are the benefits; what are the rates of the Government subvention; above all, what will the cost of it be ultimately to the Treasury?" Now, these several points he must advert to in the following order:—First, the subscriptions from the teachers; secondly, the subvention from the Government; thirdly, the benefits to be secured by the subscriptions and subvention together; fourthly, the conditions; fifthly, the cost to the State. Let hon. Members remember that the scheme referred only to certificated teachers, and it was assumed that the men entered the service at 23 years of age, and the women at 22. With regard to the definition of "future teachers," it would include those who were appointed after a certain date; but, in order to lighten the financial burden, they included in that category all the juniors now in the service and those who had less than ten years' service. The object was to lessen the category of existing teachers, because, as he would show, they were obliged to offer to them terms more favourable than those offered to future teachers. With regard to subscriptions, they proposed that every man should pay £3 annually, and every woman £2. This applied to all, whatever their salary might be, but those who enjoyed salaries of £80 a year and upwards were to pay £1 for every £25; that was, in fact, about 4 per cent. on the salaries all round. That was the calculation of the Committee, and he submitted that that was a heavy deduction. These deductions for men and women together would amount to over £150,000 annually. It would be nearer £175,000, in fact, and the House would admit that that was a large sum to deduct from the elementary teachers. He might be asked how he proposed that this sum should be collected from the 50,000 teachers scattered all over the country. It would be deducted from the Government grant to every school, and the managers would have confided to them the duty, which he was sure they could be trusted to execute, of seeing that the proper deduction was made from the salaries. As regarded the

existing teachers who joined the fund optionally—an option, indeed, which would be universally availed of—they would pay the £3 and the £2 annually as before. After considerable consideration, the Committee had been unable to propose anything in the way of back payments. It was impossible to expect people, who only receive a salary equal to their wants in a respectable position in life, to pay up any large sum on account of back payments which they had never expected to be asked to pay. But still, if any of them should be willing to pay down a sum in order to purchase a larger pension than they would otherwise obtain, it was proposed to allow them to pay the sum into the fund on the condition that they should not be able thereby to purchase by this subscription a pension of more than £100 a year. These terms were undoubtedly easy for existing teachers as compared with future teachers, but it was impossible to omit existing teachers from the general scheme. Their case, no doubt, constituted a difficulty, but that difficulty must be faced, because these teachers were a most meritorious body of people; they formed an advanced and influential section of the teaching body of England, and their claims, hopes, and aspirations could not be overlooked. He came now to the State subvention. It was proposed that for future teachers, when they arrived at a pensionable age, 10s. a year should be allowed for each year of their service. For existing teachers a sum of 10s. annually would be allowed after they had joined the fund. The great point with regard to existing teachers was that they would receive a pension equal to £1 a year for 30 years of service and upwards. This would apply to both men and women. As to those who had served less than 30 years, it was proposed that they should receive a pension at the rate of 15s. for each year. Next, the benefits would consist of the actuarial value of subscriptions plus the State subvention already described. The House might like to have an example of how this would work. For all those who received salaries of less than £80 a year, the men would receive a pension of £23 from the subscription and £18 from the State subvention, or say £43 or £44 per annum altogether. Surely this was a modest and humble pension. The women

would receive a pension of £11 from subscriptions and £16 from subvention, or £27 altogether, which was less even than a humble and modest superannuation. And, on the whole, about half of this would be derived from the annuitants' own subscriptions. This very low superannuation would comprise fully one-half of the total number of certificated teachers, or 25,000. The other, or better paid, half might, by their own subscriptions, only without any State subvention, be able to purchase pensions of from £70 to £90 a year. It would be found that the possibility of a man or woman obtaining a pension of £100 a year would be extremely rare. As to the benefits to be received by the existing teachers, the men would receive from £26 to £41 superannuation, and the women from £15 to £29. He asked the House whether anyone could propose to give less to people who were highly qualified and certificated, and who had spent their lives in the work of the education of the country. With regard to the conditions attached to the scheme, the men were to be retired compulsorily at 60 years of age, and the women at 55 years of age. He was sure the House would agree that it was but right to superannuate women a little earlier than men, considering the comparative tenderness and delicacy of their physique and the amount of nervous tension to which they were subjected. It was also proposed to give an option of retiring five years earlier, but in that case there would be reduced superannuation, and it would be found that the reduction would be so great that most teachers would probably be deterred from availing themselves of such option. The question of allowing teachers to withdraw from the service and to receive back either the whole or part of their subscriptions had been carefully considered. This was a matter which greatly interested the teaching world, for the House might be surprised to hear that 2,500 persons retired annually—the women no doubt largely upon marriage. It was proposed that if they retired with less than 10 years' service and in good health, they should be allowed to obtain repayment of their subscriptions subject to a certain deduction for cost of management. No other rebate was proposed—not even upon death, because it was

contended that the plan was for superannuation only, and did not touch life assurance. No doubt the teachers would be somewhat disappointed at this, but he was sure the House would see that the cost of what was proposed was so great that it was impossible to recommend anything more than was recommended. He now came to the last point—namely, the cost. The estimate of expenditure was based upon the actuarial calculations of Mr. Sutton, than whom he submitted it was impossible to find a higher authority in England. It was assumed after careful inquiry by the Educational Authorities, that 1,000 men and 1,500 women, or 2,500 teachers in all, retired annually. As regarded future teachers, the charge would begin of course at a very small sum and would rise gradually until after 30 years it would amount to £359,000 per annum, at which amount it would remain permanently as far as the present establishment of 50,000 teachers was concerned. This would amount to 5 or 6 per cent. on the present educational expenditure of £6,000,000 per annum. He thought it was not too much to ask Parliament to add 5 per cent. or 6 per cent. to its expenditure for the great public and personal objects which he was advocating. There would of course be an additional charge for the existing teachers. It was reckoned that this charge would be £191,000 annually, and that 17 years hence it would have risen to £279,000. It would rise above this rate during certain decades and fall again during other decades, but on the whole it would average £279,000 for 30 years and then would disappear finally. Of course hon. Members would be inclined at first sight to add the one charge to the other and say that the total amounted to over £600,000 a year. He would remind them, however, that the two charges would not arise quite simultaneously. While one was high the other would be low. When 30 years had passed away all the charge for the existing teachers would have disappeared and there would be only the sum of £359,000 left. Even £600,000 a year would be only 10 per cent. of our educational expenditure, and therefore the scheme would cost the State 10 per cent. upon that expenditure for a limited term, and 5 per cent. afterwards. He submitted, with all deference

to the august authority of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, that this was the true way of stating a charge of this kind. He was quite aware that there were other modes of stating it. Those who wished to magnify it till it loomed so largely as to stagger the imagination, adopted this cheap and easy method. They took the whole charge for a generation or half a century, and by the simple process of multiplying the annual charge by 30 or 50 produced a perfectly alarming total. Any charge, even the most modest, might be inflated to enormous proportions by this very simple arithmetical process. For instance, if he were to say that within half a century of the present time we should have spent £300,000,000, or within one generation £180,000,000, upon elementary education alone in England and Wales, it would sound quite alarming, but after all it only meant an annual expenditure of £6,000,000. The true way was to take the expenditure for each year and reckon its relation to the total educational expenditure of that year. Supposing that the figures he had given were even approximately correct, he submitted that the result was not so terrifying as some people imagined. Possibly, when the scheme came to be looked into by the present Chancellor of the Exchequer this Session, or next Session, or the Session after, some further actuarial investigation would show that something further should be added. But even supposing that the 5 per cent. in one case or 10 per cent. in another to which he had referred turned out to be 6 per cent. or 12 per cent., there would be no essential difference in the proposition he had adumbrated to the House. He submitted that the figures were relatively moderate, and contained no alarming or terrifying elements whatever. He next craved permission to refer for a few moments to the break-down provision. The Committee admitted their inability to propose any plan for providing for those teachers who broke down from sickness or other infirmity during their term of active service, or to recommend any plan whereby they might receive back the subscriptions they had paid. Yet the case of those people was so very hard and pressing, and the justice of their claim was so plain, that the Committee felt that sooner or later something must be done

in the matter. Difficult as it was to make an exact calculation for superannuation purposes, it became still more troublesome to make one on the break-down principle, and he feared that the experience, based upon the establishment of a similar fund in another part of the United Kingdom, would not be found favourable to any plan of this kind. His own personal belief was that the only way of dealing with it was to allot a certain sum annually for the purpose, say £30,000 or £50,000 a year, instead of the £6,000 which was now given, and which had proved to be utterly inadequate. If £50,000 a year were placed in the hands of the Education Department for this object he was sure the right hon. Gentleman the Vice President would be able satisfactorily to deal with the greater portion of the meritorious cases. The sum might be voted annually and no difficulty need arise in connection with it. He thanked the House with all sincerity for the remarkable patience with which it had listened to his laborious and intricate explanations. He could assure the House that he had laid before it only a small portion of the vast number of figures and statistics contained in the Committee's Report, which was indeed a perfect armoury of facts, and a quiver well stored with figures. It thoroughly deserved the careful consideration of every hon. Member who cared for the future education of the country. This was by no means a party question. The majority of the teachers possibly belonged to the Party to which he was politically opposed; but that fact did not diminish the zeal which he and his colleagues entertained for their welfare. Nor did this question relate to any one section of teachers; it included the teachers of Board schools and of voluntary schools of all denominations. He did not ask the House to vote for any particular plan. He had submitted, with some detail, the plan of the Committee, but he had felt that a business assembly like that House would have reproached him if he had ventured to bring forward the matter, without giving some of the principal figures and data on which the recommendations of the Committee were based. And although the House might not be able to do anything practically in the matter this Session, yet if hon. Members would only affirm the principle they

would gladden the hearts and raise the spirits of thousands of men and women all over the country, who were working laboriously for the welfare of the rising generation. It would, moreover, give great satisfaction to a vast body of school managers, and to large numbers of ministers and others of all denominations, as well as to the higher dignitaries of the Church and State, who were interested in the work, and it would shed a ray of hope throughout all branches of the Education Department. He could only, in conclusion, appeal to his right hon. Friend the Minister of Education to remember the work of the Committee, of which he was a Member, and now to come into line, standing shoulder to shoulder with those who had sat upstairs with him.

\*Mr. MATHER (Lancashire, South East Gorton) said, he seconded the Motion with very great pleasure. He agreed with the last speaker that this was not a Party question, for the welfare of the children of this country, and the welfare especially of the children of the working classes, came near to the heart of every Member of the House. The teachers, too, deserved their sympathy in the performance of their laborious duties. The recommendations of the Select Committee formed a material part of the speech of the hon. Baronet the Member for the Kingston Division of Surrey, and the Chancellor of the Exchequer might have been somewhat appalled on hearing that in this his first year at the Treasury he was to be invited to find £500,000 or more towards this superannuation scheme. But it was not for them to enter fully into the facts and figures placed before them by the Chairman of the Committee which sat upstairs. He had long felt that the status of the teachers of this country required their earnest consideration. They formed a body of men second to none in the Public Service. They had endured for something like 20 years the toil and difficulty of their work with an amount of patience which deserved the highest credit. No one could say that the teacher had received a salary which was more than his worth for the labour performed. It would be agreed that the great body of them certainly were under-paid, when their position was compared with that of teachers in other countries. In France,

Germany, Switzerland, and the United States provision was made to enable the teacher to save for old age, or else there was a State or Local Pension Fund for the same purpose, so that when they had been a certain number of years in the service they might be sure of adequate support. This had been very clearly set forth by Mr. Matthew Arnold, who, in 1886, at the request of the Education Department, visited Germany, France, and Switzerland in order to attempt to solve some important questions with regard to the pay and position of the teachers. He reported that in every country he visited the teachers had a retiring pension, to establish which a reduction was made from their salaries. In France, for instance, a pension could be claimed at 55 years of age, after a service of 25 years, and it practically amounts to three-fourths of the average salary. It was true that England began her system of national education at a later period than the countries mentioned, but that was no reason why we should delay longer than necessary the completion of our system in the sense in which foreign countries had completed theirs by providing pensions for those teachers who had spent their lives in the service of their country. Most hon. Members, probably, had something to do with employing clerks or skilled labour of some kind, but he believed there was no class of persons who were employed in skilled labour upon whom the mental and nervous strain was greater than it was upon teachers in elementary schools. The physical effort was not small, and when they considered that teachers had to carry day by day upon their shoulders the responsibility of forming the mind and character of the children committed to their care, they would agree that the anxieties of that occupation were not equalled by those of any other employment. If any further claim than that of humanity were needed to the consideration of this question, he would put it on the grounds of education itself. The elementary education of this country must be the foundation of the country's future progress among the nations of the earth, and the quality of the education must depend on the quality of the teachers employed. It was true that we in this country had not hitherto possessed the best possible

system of training teachers for their work in public elementary schools. But of late years there had been a considerable improvement in that respect, and the extra training had involved an increased strain and responsibility on the teachers, who had felt it necessary to exercise greater control over the character of the children committed to their care. The calling to which the teachers had devoted themselves should be made not only honourable but dignified in every way as regarded social position, and therefore it was imperative on Parliament to put the teachers in a position where they would be free from anxiety in their old age. They ought not to be made to feel that the provision for their closing years depended upon any accident that might occur. It was admitted on all hands that some scheme of superannuation, State-aided or otherwise—must be designed for this useful body of citizens. He could quite understand the Chancellor of the Exchequer looking with dismay on such a proposal as that put forward by the hon. Baronet. But he would remind the right hon. Gentleman that there were other sources of money besides the Imperial Exchequer. In supporting the Resolution then before the House they were not pledging themselves to any particular scheme. All he could say was that from whatever source the money was obtained, whether from local rates or elsewhere, he hoped the House would declare that they were resolved that some pension scheme should be established in the future—and he trusted that the Government of the day, hearing the unanimous expression of opinion, would devote themselves to the question at once. The matter was urgent; it ought to have been settled ten years ago. A Royal Commission and two Select Committees by their Reports had sanctioned this demand, all interested in the public elementary education of the country had affirmed its justice. They could not sufficiently recognise the importance of teachers, male and female, in respect of the future interests of the country. It had been said that the hand that rocked the cradle ruled the world; that, speaking of mothers, was perfectly true; but it was equally true that those who formed the minds, the characters of the rising generation from infancy to the age of 14 or 15 years, were at the same time

*Mr. Mather*

forming the destinies of this country. Those destinies depended on the employment of the best possible system of education, that education involved sympathy and earnestness of purpose on the part of those engaged in directing it, and to secure these qualities they should pay the teachers such salaries as would enable them to make provision for old age, or at any rate would insure their independence when their working days were over. With these feelings deeply fixed in his mind he seconded the Resolution, in the earnest hope that the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Vice President of the Council would give the matter earnest consideration, and speedily place this deserving class of public servants in the position they were entitled to hold.

**Amendment proposed,**

To leave out from the word "That" to the end of the Question, in order to add the words "in the opinion of this House, it is desirable that a National State-aided system of Superannuation for Teachers in Public Elementary Schools in England and Wales should be established at an early date,"—(*Sir Richard Temple*.)

—instead thereof.

**Question proposed,** "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question."

\***THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EX-CHEQUER** (Sir W. HARCOURT, Derby): I only rise to take part in the Debate for a few minutes. The educational part of the question will be dealt with far better than I could by my right hon. Friend the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education; but it is my duty, after what has fallen from hon. Gentlemen, to say a few words on the financial bearings of the question. The objects of the Motion, I venture to say, could not have been better brought forward or seconded, and with every word that has been said as to the claim of this class of the community on the sympathy of Parliament and the country I cordially agree. No public servants are more deserving of attention than the elementary teachers; but it is my duty to lay before the House the real nature, as far as I understand it, of the demand that is made. I was a little relieved to find that my hon. Friends did not nail their colours to the mast of the Report

of the Select Committee, and was also a little astonished by the prudent depreciation of the hon. Baronet who made the Motion as to the system of capitalising values, because in another connection the House has heard of a sum of £17,000,000 which is taken as a capitalised sum. My hon. Friend apparently did not desire to alarm the House; but let me tell it the result of our examination of this question. It is that the cost of the proposal amounts to £25,000,000.

\*SIR F. S. POWELL (Wigan): The ultimate cost, not the present value.

SIR W. HARCOURT: The present value. But the State is bound to look to the whole charge, and not merely to the annual charge. The figures given by the hon. Baronet were £329,000 for the future teachers, and £270,000 for the present teachers. That gives a total sum of £600,000, which I am obliged to consider a large sum, though perhaps in better times it might be regarded as a trifle. If the sum is capitalised it will appear still larger. The hon. Member opposite has admitted that the figures he has given only represent a portion of the ultimate cost. The hon. Gentleman has not calculated upon an increase in the number of teachers, the cost of voluntary retirement, and a provision for teachers who have broken down. According to the information I have received, it would not be safe to capitalise the sum which the hon. Member asks for at less than £25,000,000. I do not pretend to say that you cannot afford to pay £25,000,000. This country is very rich—the rich are very rich, while the poor are very poor—and if this House thinks fit to incur a liability for that amount the country is capable of paying it. I do not say that you ought not to incur such a charge, and I am not going to offer any opposition to this Motion; but, occupying the position I do, it is my duty to tell the House what the consequences of agreeing to this Motion will be. There is one thing that the House ought not to do, and that is to consent to incur a charge of this nature and grumble when it is asked to provide the means for meeting it. I am afraid that the House, like private people, often likes to buy things, and afterwards object to pay for them. That is a tendency in human nature from which this House is not at all free, and,

therefore, all I can say is that having acquiesced readily and freely in this Motion, I hope to find the House of Commons as unanimous when the time comes for making this proposal—I do not say it will be this year, or the second year, or the third year—but when the time comes I hope the House will vote the taxes that will be necessary for the proposal, for it will mean additional taxation unless you are so fortunate as to have a large surplus. The matter is entirely for the House to decide—I offer no opposition to the Motion. The hon. Member has put the Motion on a very proper footing. He has only demanded that there should be a contribution from the State towards the object, without defining the contribution or binding the House to any particular scheme. On referring to the Report of the Committee with respect to local contribution I read with satisfaction the evidence of a gentleman entitled to a good deal of weight, Mr. Hance, the Clerk to the School Board of Liverpool, who expressed the opinion that not only the teachers themselves, and the State, but also the managers of schools, and the Local Authorities should contribute to this fund. It seems to me that is an extremely reasonable proposition. I do not pledge myself to the scheme, but it is worth consideration. As I have said, I entirely agree with the object of the Motion of the hon. Member, and as he has wisely confined himself to declaring the principle without endeavouring to extract any proposal from the Government I cordially support the Motion.

MR. BRODRICK (Surrey, Guildford): I am sure that every body on this side of the House will not only agree in congratulating the hon. Baronet on the favourable reception he has secured for his Motion, but also in thanking the Chancellor of the Exchequer for the extremely sympathetic way in which he has spoken of the Motion. Undoubtedly the sum the right hon. Gentleman dealt with is a large sum, and I only rise to suggest one or two observations in modification of the very heavy bill he has drawn against the future. I think it will be of considerable interest to the House to hear from the Vice President of the Council, in a little more detail, by what process the Government pro-



pose to deal with the Motion. It is clear that the country will have to bear the cost in one form or another if there should be a superannuation of teachers. It is well known to every school manager that the salaries of school teachers are rising every day, and that the difficulty of obtaining teachers at anything like the same rates as prevailed 10 years ago has very greatly increased. There are, roughly, 50,000 school teachers at the present time. A rise of only £10 in their salaries—not by any means an inconsiderable amount to take—would mean £500,000 a year; and that capitalised, being a charge for a time, brings us back to our old friend, the sum of £17,000,000. The Chancellor of the Exchequer thinks that £25,000,000 is the final sum; and I am not prepared to say that the £17,000,000 represents the final sum to be paid by the British people. Therefore it is obvious that we shall be paying extra money in one form or another, and no one knows better than the Vice President of the Council that we shall not be achieving the same result. I am sure there will be sympathy with the Chancellor of the Exchequer in his warning as regards making school managers recollect that superannuation and salary go together. I venture to press on the Vice President of the Council that this subject should be treated without delay. We are in a rather peculiar position. Some years ago he brought forward a Motion in favour of teachers appointed between 1846 and 1851, in relation to whom the Treasury acted, I will not say absolutely illegally, but unhandsomely, as was admitted by the late Mr. Forster and by the present President of the Board of Trade, who was then Vice President of the Council. This fact bears on the present situation, that in 1884, when I moved that Motion, these teachers' pensions were recognised, though in 1870 that right was disputed by the Treasury. I think I am right in saying that half the teachers appointed between 1846 and 1851 are worn out and unable to continue their work, and the point of that observation is, that we have arrived at a period when there is a larger number more who have arrived at a time when they cannot work. My hon. Friend has not based his Motion on the ground of charity; but mainly on this ground—that

*Mr. Brodrick*

we have got in the schools a large body of excellent men, who have done long and excellent service, who would willingly retire but for the fact that in many cases they would have to face penury, and that you have school managers who are unwilling to dispense with their services on considerations of charity. One cannot doubt that if the Vice President were to announce to-night the acceptance of this scheme, we would have a large number of retirements to deal with in the next six months, but the longer these retirements are delayed the more the education of the children must be impeded and delayed. I hope the Vice President of the Committee will be able to give us an assurance either that he sees in the scheme of the hon. Baronet ground for action, or that he himself has been able to elaborate a scheme which he can lay before the country, so that we may feel certain that this great question of the superannuation of the teachers, in which the honour of this House is more or less engaged, will be properly and effectively determined.

\*SIR FRANCIS S. POWELL (Wigan) said, he did not think that those who were in favour of the system of superannuation could complain of the speech of the Chancellor of the Exchequer. He thought he might say of the speech that it was actuated by a sense of financial sympathy. The maxim which the right hon. Gentleman appeared to have in his mind was that which they used to hear so frequently in the old days, *Volenti non fit injuria*; or, in other words, if the taxpayers were willing to endure the burden, then it was for him (the Chancellor of the Exchequer) to see that it should not be endured. He could not, however, help appreciating the ingenuity of the right hon. Gentleman, because while delicately suggesting that those provisions might sooner or later be painful to the taxpayer, he had suggested that a portion of the burden should be transferred from him to the ratepayer. He had seen the right hon. Gentleman on many occasions exhibit a tenderness which did not, however, always extend to the ratepayers of the country. He was not quite certain whether the Chancellor of the Exchequer had entirely appreciated the recommendation of Mr. Hance, clerk of the School Board at Liverpool. Mr. Hance had,

according to the view of the Committee, exactly concurred with the view of the Committee, and his testimony ought to be quoted as entirely in sympathy with the advice of the Committee. He hoped before the Debate closed that the Vice President of the Council would afford some suggestions to the House respecting those unfortunate and melancholy cases in which teachers had broken down. The Committee had found it quite impossible to make any recommendation affecting those broken-down schoolmasters because they had no facts, and they were anxious to submit to the House in all things some basis for calculation. In the Report of the Select Committee it would be found that they proposed that the whole of the Superannuation Fund should be for the benefit of all the teachers alike, and there should be no preference or favour for voluntary school teachers or Board school teachers; and he was quite sure that in these days, when the work of education was shared by Board schools and voluntary schools, there must be complete fairness and entire impartiality between the two classes of schools when they come to deal with the subject of pensions. It was impossible to exaggerate the services of the teachers. He believed the teachers of this country in voluntary schools and in Board schools alike were equal to the elementary teachers of any country in the world. He had had the opportunity, not recently, but some years ago, of visiting many schools in America, and he could say that the result of these examinations was that the teaching and the teachers in our schools were greatly superior to the teaching and the teachers in the United States. There was no doubt that of all professions which were exacting and caused premature decay of vital forces, there was none so trying and none which caused decay more rapidly than the profession of teaching. This decay was very often of a sudden character; teachers broke down even before they knew that they were affected. He had often observed that the teacher would in one day appear to be in the possession of his full powers, and in the course of a week or a fortnight would become unequal to his duties. He need not say anything with regard to the effect of teaching on the scholar; that was obvious. They had, therefore, in this matter of pensions, to

have regard to the teacher on the one hand and the scholar on the other, and he thought the time had come when the proper and wise rule of forming systems of pensions and superannuation which existed in various professions, in the Civil Service, and in railways, should be extended to the profession of teaching, where, indeed, it was most urgently required. They should bear in mind that this system of pensions of teachers was not a new system. They had in this country a system of pensions for many years, but it must be admitted by all who had made inquiries on the subject that the present most limited system was at once imperfect, disappointing, and unjust. It was imperfect because it only applied to few teachers; it was disappointing because those who most deserved pensions failed to obtain them; and it was unjust because in many cases merit did not meet with a sufficient or adequate reward. In dealing with this question there were no doubt great difficulties, because they had to regard not only future teachers but existing teachers. Future teachers might pay an annual contribution to a State fund, and create a superannuation annuity for themselves—not, perhaps, as much as they would wish to see them possess—but still a superannuation annuity of a limited kind. But when they looked to the existing teachers, those who had most claim on their sympathy, because they had laboured many years, and the time of their repose was near at hand, they found that there was no adequate provision for them. It was this difficulty which the Committee had to face, and they believed that it would be a most incomplete system which did not regard these deserving and meritorious men and women. The proposal of the Committee was that the country should make a general provision for these teachers of £1 for each year of service, instead of 10s., as in the case of future teachers, which, with the aid of other assistance they would be able to obtain, would ensure to them a future of moderate comfort. He did not wish to detain the House unduly, but he hoped he might be allowed to say they did not present their Report as the best scheme that could be devised, though he believed it was as good as any Committee of the House could have presented. Of course, no Committee could have the command

of the means of investigation which were in the hands of the Government, and no Committee could have that power and that force which were at the command of the Chancellor of the Exchequer; but if the Government were unable to grant them all their requests he hoped, at least, they might travel some distance along the same path. He did not think the Government ought to be appalled by the large figure of £24,000,000. A grant of £6,000,000 was now given for education, and to add to that grant an amount which if capitalised came to £24,000,000 was no overpowering enlargement. To his knowledge the teachers had waited long for this reform, and having waited so long he hoped they would wait no longer, but that the Government would either this year, or in a year not far distant, bring forward a large and comprehensive scheme; whichever Government was in power he hoped it would adopt this policy. He hoped he might appeal with some confidence to the Vice President of the Council (Mr. Acland) to make some declaration that would bring comfort to this most meritorious class, so that they might look upon their desires, though not fully accomplished, as so nearly within their reach that their fulfilment would not be much longer delayed.

THE VICE PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL (Mr. ACLAND, York, W.R., Rotherham): Although there is no subject with which I believe we are more agreed in desiring efficiency than in national education, yet even our educational defects have sometimes had a controversial flavour about them. I find myself particularly happy on the first occasion I have had the honour to address the House as Vice President of the Council—to address it upon a subject upon which we are thoroughly agreed as to the principle we have adopted. I congratulate my hon. Friend the Member for Kingston (Sir R. Temple) on having secured so early an opportunity of bringing into action the work in which we and our friends were so long engaged in the Committee over which he presided. I think, whatever else we did, we cleared the ground and obtained a great deal of valuable information that will be useful to those who have to put the work into execution. The subject which is now before us is, after all, part of a large subject of provision for old age in various

forms, which is interesting and exciting the minds of a great many persons in this country. In regard to education, the need of providing superannuation for good teachers has long been felt. In the Universities we find our colleges providing in their new schemes arrangements for the retirement of teachers at a certain age; our grammar schools we find providing in their schemes for the same object, and now this question is fully ripe to be brought before the House of Commons. I am glad it has been brought forward, because without the sanction and approval of the House of Commons I think no Chancellor of the Exchequer could have spoken in the sympathetic way in which my right hon. Friend (Sir W. Harcourt) has spoken to-night on this subject. It is necessary for us to prove in the case of the teachers that theirs is a special case demanding special consideration, and I think we can prove that; I think we can show, in the matter of education, if there is a class of workers who need to be fresh and bright in their work it is the class of teachers; I think we can show, if there is a class of public servants who may cause disaster and misfortune by being inefficient through old age, it is the class of teachers. You may have here and there a single servant who may not be altogether fit for his work, in which case the State suffers to some extent; you may have here and there perhaps a policeman who is not quite so efficient as another policeman, though he might be perfectly fit for some easier job, where the safety of the public was not seriously jeopardised. But every teacher, if ineffective in his work, is directly affecting, to a certain extent, the welfare of future generations, and therefore from that point of view everything that adds to the teacher's anxiety—his anxiety about the future, his anxiety about his own family—everything that adds to the wear and tear of the teacher is a disaster, not only to him, but the country at large. I think we can draw no distinction between any class of teachers; all our teachers are subject to wear and tear of different kinds. There are the difficulties of town teachers through town life and some of the children they have to deal with. There are the difficulties of the country teachers through the great variety of work they have to do, passing

from one class to another, and having to put up with a good deal that is harassing in their daily work. In either case there is great liability to that wear and tear, great risk to anxiety, if they fear the future is absolutely uncertain, and for that reason we all desire to give them some evidence of certainty about their provision when they shall retire in an honoured old age. There is a point which has been alluded to in this Debate which I think it important to notice, and that is that some people say that some of the salaries of these teachers are so good they could easily provide for themselves. That may be the case, but whether they make adequate arrangements for their own retirement or not, we should see that every teacher is provided for in old age, if we can, by some compulsory method, and for this reason you may find a teacher providing for himself what he thinks an adequate provision for the close of his life; the investment he has chosen breaks down, and he is in as bad a condition as if he had received the smallest salary all through his life. When the small pensions are administered by the Vice President and Lord President to teachers, again and again one finds lamentable cases of teachers who have had high salaries and who have done their best to provide for old age, but have chosen unfortunate investments so that all their savings have been swept away. In the cause of the children we are thinking of we must beware we provide for all cases alike, and make some arrangement by which we see that all the savings are properly and securely invested. The hon. Member for Guildford (Mr. Brodrick) said something about existing pensions. Teachers who came into the service before 1851 are now on the unlimited list; the pensions are small it is true, but still all those who are deserving can receive one of these pensions. Teachers who came in from 1851 to 1862 are on a limited list, and the list is lamentably limited, and I am sure my right hon. Friend the late Vice President (Sir W. Hart Dyke) will agree with me there is no task more painful than attempting to select between the unfortunate cases brought before us for the giving away of the small pensions that are available. On this subject my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer desires me to say he is willing

to make a reasonable addition that that provision, the £6,500, shall at least be reasonably added to with a view to our meeting many of the pressing cases brought before us.

**MR. BRODRICK :** What will be the limit in those cases, the amount of the individual pensions?

**MR. ACLAND :** The pensions are of three kinds, £20, £25 and £30. He will be aware the proposals of the Committee suggest more than that sum per teacher, but it makes a reasonable provision.

**MR. BRODRICK :** I was alluding to the original Minute from 1851 to 1862, and that from 1846 to 1851, which held out a hope of two-thirds of the salary.

**MR. ACLAND :** The hon. Gentleman is quite right, that was so when the original Minute was made, but all I am able now to do is to state that the £6,500 will be added to. It has been mentioned that almost all European countries have some time ago adopted a system such as that we are considering to-night, and one reason for that is that State education on a State basis is of older duration in those countries than in England. If this subject had not been introduced to-night it must have been brought before our notice at an early date, because in the course of a few years we should be face to face with the fact of the large number of teachers that had been appointed since the Act of 1870, and many of them will be verging on old age. In 1870, we had 12,000 certificated teachers, but at the present time we have 50,000, which shows the rapidity with which education has been growing since Mr. Forster's Act. In another 20 years it will be more pressing than now, and it is far wiser to grapple with it at present than leave it until it becomes more embarrassing. Something has been said about sources from which we can draw means for an elaborate scheme. I must say, and all who were on the Committee will agree with me, that the teachers, represented through the National Union of Teachers, showed a thoroughly willing and anxious spirit to take their part in making provision for themselves. They pointed out to us what is perfectly true, that the sum of £3 for a man and £2 for a woman was a very fair proportion of

the very small salaries some of them receive at the present moment. Though salaries have risen during the last few years, we have between 4,000 and 5,000 certificated mistresses getting less than £50 a year, and nearly 4,000 masters getting less than £75 a year, that is to say, one-sixth of the certificated masters and mistresses get these very small salaries, and if they embark upon a contribution such as that suggested we can hardly expect them to do any more.

We came to this conclusion: we must, if possible, arrange for a provision at least of a minimum salary, such as that the hon. Baronet opposite suggested, something approaching from £40 to £50. Then as to local sources, it was suggested to us in various quarters they ought not to be left out of any future consideration. There may be means of deductions from the grants, both in the case of School Boards and voluntary schools, in which the managers may be made to take their share. Already Scotland, which has a different system to ours—the universal School Board system—is allowed to make arrangements of that sort, and a certain number of the Board teachers are pensioned in Scotland by the Board schools themselves. But our system is different, and being what it is, with large numbers of voluntary and Board schools, there is strong argument for something in the nature of central management. Teachers pass from one kind of school to another, and one district to another, and we have felt over and over again it would be extremely difficult to arrange a system of local management and local contribution. I hope, at any rate, we have been able to show we approach the whole of this subject not in any grudging spirit. The hon. Mover of this Motion has said that he does not press the words “at an early date,” and I am sure he will be aware they must be liberally interpreted with a view to preparing a scheme that will be solvent and secure. The example of the Irish scheme on this same subject has been alluded to as a warning to us. When we embark upon a scheme we must make sure it will be sound and secure to everybody. Mr. Sutton himself is not unwilling to give us his calculations. He has given us something like £22,000,000 as the total that will be involved in the next 40 or 50 years, and

he told us his basis was made at 3 per cent.; but the Treasury is not willing to take that as the basis. That also, he told us, includes England and Wales. Then the most difficult of all questions, the break-downs, is left outside altogether, and I confess, from all I have seen from the work going on with our small pension scheme, it is impossible to leave out of sight the question of break-downs. If a man who comes into the pension scheme at 23 years of age were to break down at the age of 59, one year before he becomes entitled to his pension, is he to get nothing at all? The problem is a difficult one and requires careful consideration. Then we have to bear in mind the number of women teachers who get married, and they desire to have some scheme by which some part of their contributions may be returned on retiring from the service. These and many other considerations have to be borne in mind before we can arrive at a thoroughly satisfactory scheme. We must not enter into it too hastily, but after the approval of the House of Commons, which we have received to-night, I think we can begin to enter upon its consideration at once. In all these matters of national education we are willing to take the view that the welfare of the teachers is a matter of the highest consideration, and in paying attention to their welfare we are directly for their success and indirectly for the children's success, making one of the best investments we can. Anything, whatever it be, that affects the children in their surroundings must be good, whether it be teachers, instructors or buildings, their intelligence and their character depend absolutely upon it. We are bound, as a duty to those who come after us, to see to the interests of their teachers as well as the interest of themselves; to see to it that the children are not neglected because the teachers are over-worked and over-strained in old age, and by considering carefully the welfare of the teachers as well as the welfare of the children fulfil that educational duty that is always cast upon us—namely, to give to all the children as complete an education as we can.

MR. LAWRENCE (Liverpool, Abercromby) said, he thought all would agree with him that in the Vice President of the Council they had one who knew his

*Mr. Acland*

subject, and they heartily congratulated him upon the important position he occupied. He cordially sympathised with the Motion of his hon. Friend, which related to a subject that had been before them for some years. The Liverpool School Board had taken a very prominent part in bringing this question before the public, and it was through the Liverpool School Board that a Conference of School Boards was held to consider the matter. So far back as 1891 the School Boards of Manchester, Sheffield, Nottingham, and Liverpool came to a resolution similar to the one before the House, and the views of these Boards were communicated to and endorsed by the majority of the great School Boards throughout the country. They had heard the very proper way in which the Chancellor of the Exchequer had dealt with the subject. It was only right that the Chancellor of the British Exchequer should be careful how the money of the taxpayer was expended, but what appeared to him evident about the matter was that they had already established the principle that our public servants should be paid by pension as well as by salary. Teachers had become public servants since the passing of the Education Act of 1870, and inasmuch as they had very handsomely pensioned the constables and Civil servants, it was only right to go forward and pension those hard-working servants, the public teachers. He agreed with the hon. Gentleman who had just sat down that it was essential to the proper discharge of their duties that the teachers should have full vivacity of mind and body, and when that ceased they were no longer fit teachers of youth, and should receive some consideration for their past services. If by any means they could bring about a gradual and sufficient flow of teachers they would be going far to improve the efficiency of the teaching of the country; therefore he looked upon this question not as one of charity, but as one of business. What he would suggest was that they should follow, as far as possible, the existing lines laid down in the Civil Service Pension Scheme. He believed that scheme involved a retiring pension in case of break down, but, any way, as far as possible, let it follow on established lines, and then there would be no heart-

burning between different classes of public officials. The Chancellor of the Exchequer referred to an answer by Mr. Hance, the Clerk to the Liverpool School Board, stating that he considered the rates should bear some share in the scheme. In a further question put to Mr. Hance it was elicited that he meant that deductions should be made from the grants, and not that the local rates should contribute. While determining to give a pension they should see that it should not be too lavish, and he hoped the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Acland) would steer clear of life assurance. He desired to give a cordial support to the Motion.

SIR A. K. ROLLIT (Islington, S.) desired, before the Debate closed, to say a few words in favour of the Amendment. What had occurred that night marked a great development in their educational policy, and those interested in education could not but express their great appreciation of the spirit in which the subject had been dealt with, both by the Mover and Seconder of the Amendment, and also by the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Vice President of the Council on Education. They were grateful to the latter gentleman for the small addition which would now be made to the Pension Fund, and which, they hoped, would soon be increased. It might be urged that the teachers ought to make provision for their own requirements from their incomes, but he would point out that 50 per cent. of the male teachers had salaries below £100 a year, whilst in the case of the female teachers the salaries were even less.

\*MR. CREMER asked, was the House to understand that 50 per cent. of the teachers were paid less than £100 a year?

SIR A. ROLLIT believed he was justified in going beyond even that; but he was certainly justified in stating that to the extent of 50 per cent. the salaries in the case of men were below £100 a year, and in the case of women even less. It was clear that, under these circumstances, the teachers were not in a position to make provision for their old age, and the State was therefore bound to undertake the duty of doing so to a considerable extent, especially when the principle of the proposal included a large contribution from the teachers themselves, in the shape of what was really deferred

pay. If the question of cost were referred to, then that point was by no means one-sided. In other departments of the State—the police, for instance—they made provision for those who sought the detection and punishment of crime. In this case they were now proposing to reward properly those who prevented a very large amount of the crime of the country; and when they remembered also that education was undoubtedly not only a preventive of crime, but some stay against poverty. They made an additional saving when they considered the burden that must otherwise fall in a great measure upon the rates of the country. When they spoke, therefore, of £17,000,000 or even £25,000,000, he said there was another side to the question, and that a far greater saving would be effected by liberality to their teachers. In this matter parsimony was not economy, and that liberality which the House was asked to exercise would be found in the end the truest economy in dealing with this problem. He recognised the great service which voluntary schools and voluntary action had rendered to education in this country, and provision for voluntary school teachers on the same lines as the provision for Board School teachers was most absolutely justified. The House was asked to carry out a well considered Report prepared by educationists of the highest standard, and it had given rise to an expression of opinion from the Treasury Bench, which they hoped would be fruitful, in an educational sense, to the country. On behalf of the teachers he represented he thanked the Mover and Seconder of the Amendment and the Members of the Government for the manner in which they had treated this subject, which was so important to the best interests of the country.

SIR F. MILNER (Notts, Bassettlaw) said, there was a consensus of opinion that the claims of the teachers had been too long neglected by Parliament. The opinion was universal that there was no more deserving body of men than were the teachers. As had been truly said, teachers did more towards repressing crime than did the police. As a class they spent their lives in the service of the country, and they were entitled to some consideration when they were worn out. He did not think that sufficient attention had

been paid to the claims of the teachers who were appointed before 1851. The lot of these teachers was a particularly hard one, and they had been badly treated by Parliament. He contended that on the facts these teachers had an absolute claim to an adequate pension from the Government. In 1846, the Committee of Council on Education passed a resolution—

“That it was expedient to give pensions to teachers after a certain length of service.”

Shortly afterwards they passed a resolution—

“That a retiring pension may be granted to any schoolmaster or mistress who shall be rendered incapable by age or infirmity of continuing to teach a school efficiently.”

Such teachers to have been engaged in teaching for 15 years, the pension not to exceed two-thirds of the annual income of the teacher while conducting a school. The object of the Pension Minute was clearly stated in an official letter, dated March 11th, 1847, in these words—

“My Lords being desirous to offer the strongest inducements to schoolmasters and schoolmistresses to render long and efficient services to the public, have opened the prospect of a retiring pension to this class of teachers.”

Pensions and other direct benefits were, by their Lordships' orders, held out to the best qualified scholars as inducements to become pupil teachers. Thus, in Volume I, page 34, of the same Minutes they found it stated—

“Their Lordships request that in their ordinary tour of inspection the Inspectors will avail themselves of the opportunity to inform teachers and scholars of the advantages placed within their reach—namely, an offer of a pension.”

These Pension Minutes were debated in Parliament. They were passed in the House of Commons by 372 votes to 47, and in the Lords without division. Copies of the Minute of 1846 were sent for each apprentice, and a broad sheet, showing the benefits to pupil teachers, had to be fixed in a prominent part of the school, where it could be read by scholars and their parents. On this broad sheet Queen's Scholarships were promised to the best qualified pupil teachers, and appointments in Departments of the Public Service were to be open to the less successful teachers. Thus the less qualified teachers were

sure of a suitable pension when incapacitated for work. Was it reasonable to suppose that the same benefit was not to be extended to those who showed superior qualifications? It could be proved to demonstration that teachers appointed before 1846 were induced to put forward extra exertions, and to go in for more expensive training on the distinct understanding that eventually they would receive a suitable pension. It was, therefore, a gross breach of faith on the part of Parliament to deprive them of what they were officially promised. It was true that a new Pension Minute was passed in 1851 much to the disadvantage of the teachers. The construction then put upon the 1846 Minute was altogether at variance with the object stated by the Secretary at the time and at variance with the Minute itself. He submitted that the alterations made in 1851 could not injure the claims of those appointed between 1846 and 1851. There was a remarkable fact that for several years after 1851 the Pension Minute of 1846 continued to be sent out to pupil teachers all over the country on their apprenticeship, and no intimation was given that the objects and intentions of the Government to them had undergone serious change, that pensions were to be of small value, wholly uncertain and no longer given as a reward. Thus teachers appointed after 1846, and indeed up to 1860, were also engaged upon the understanding as their predecessors, and such teachers had an absolute claim to a suitable pension. He trusted that Parliament even at this late hour would recognise their plain duty to this most deserving class of men. With regard to the teachers appointed after 1860, their case was somewhat different. They became Civil servants in every sense of the word, and they ought to be treated as such. What had been stated by the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Vice President of the Council would give some encouragement to the general body of teachers, and he trusted that serious attention would also be directed to the case of the old teachers appointed before 1846.

\*SIR W. HART DYKE (Kent, Dartford): Before this Debate closes, I should like to say a very few words with regard to the discussion which has taken place on the Motion of my hon. Friend.

I do not think a few hours of the time of Parliament could be very much better employed than in discussing a Motion of this kind, and, Sir, a high compliment has been paid to the cause which my hon. Friend the Member for Kingston has so well espoused by the unanimity of the House concerning this very difficult and vexed problem. Our unanimity this evening is almost refreshing, and, Sir, there is only one difficulty which we have to face in drawing this Debate to a conclusion, and it is no new difficulty in this House. We are perfectly unanimous as to the object we have in view, and I have no doubt we shall all go home to-night in a most amiable frame of mind after this discussion, but there will be one thing absent to make our comfort complete—we shall not go home with the money in our pocket to carry out the scheme portrayed by my hon. Friend. I do not rise, however, to throw a note of discord into this Debate, for I think that, on the whole, we have no complaint whatever to make of the statement of the Chancellor of the Exchequer. The right hon. Gentleman met us very fairly, and I say so the more readily because we have some evidence, I think, of his sympathy and that of my right hon. Friend opposite (Mr. Acland) with the cause we are all espousing. I understand the Chancellor of the Exchequer proposes immediately to make some addition to the small annual sum now awarded to these teachers. The right hon. Gentleman has somewhat terrified us by an actuarial calculation which has been made by Her Majesty's Treasury, and has threatened us at starting with an expenditure of £25,000,000. That seems a very terrifying amount, but I do not think that those of us who are anxious to carry our views to a practical end will complain of any scheme that may be ultimately adopted, provided that it fairly and honestly carries out the object we have in view, and carries out those objects quickly. If there is one thing more than another which strikes any man who is in the position of the Vice President of the Council, it is that this is a matter which will not brook delay. What has been the treatment of these unfortunate teachers as regards the question of pension? As my hon. Friend has reminded the House, it is now 47 years ago since promises of a pension were



actually held out to them under the Minute of 1846, and during this whole period of years this unfortunate body of men and women have been following this Will-o'-the-Wisp of a pension without success, and following a most arduous occupation without the ray of sunlight which might be afforded them if they had a prospect of a small competence in their later years. I wish to press upon the House the necessity of dealing at once with this question of a pension to elementary teachers. I wish to point out how, since 1845, the demands on the teaching community have increased. During the late Parliament we completely transformed our educational system, and in a manner to cast an enormously heavier burden upon these men and women who compose our teaching staff. And what I also want to point out is this: that if it was necessary in 1846 to deal adequately and generously with these teachers—as was stated in evidence before the Royal Commission which considered this question—I say that that necessity has been considerably increased, that an additional strain has been put upon these persons, and that it is tenfold more incumbent upon us now under the new system—and a high-pressure system—in our elementary schools, to frame some scheme or other which will meet these cases of emergency as they may arise. There are two real reasons we ought to consider in urging this case. One is a reason of State, and the other is of a more charitable kind. The House of Commons has been unanimous to-day in the consideration of this difficult problem, and I acknowledge it is a very difficult problem to solve. My right hon. Friend, I know, will need all his energies to solve these difficulties, and I was pleased to hear him say it was impossible to deal with this case piecemeal, and that he must deal at once with all the teachers. There will be not only the cases of the existing and future teachers, but above all I hope he will deal generously with those teachers who break down from over-work and ill-health. I know it has been the habit of the House of Commons—and it is a very practical one—in dealing with all these cases, to search for a precedent before taking action. But to-night have had the luxury of securing our unanimity without a single Member

*Sir W. Hart Dyke*

the House seeking for any precedent. I think we cannot wonder at this unanimity, because the more we consider what the lives of these teachers are, how constant and incessant their work is, how brain-wearing it is, and how much the future of this country depends, day by day, and hour by hour, on their successful efforts. I say we cannot be too generous in regard to our dealing with them. My right hon. Friend has remarked on the list he will soon have to go through in doling out this small pittance to our elementary teachers. There is no sadder or more miserable task for any public man to undertake than to have to go through this list of our elementary teachers and to deal with their claims. The Office which my right hon. Friend holds is one of the pleasantest which a public man can occupy, and the nature of the work and its results will amply repay any man for his efforts. But there is one portion of it which I think is the most miserable and sad that any man can undergo. It is to go through this list and see how few of the teachers out of this small sum of £6,000 can really be assisted when the emergency arises? It is a very sad state of things, indeed, that we have to face when a list of these applications must be gone through; but I am glad the Government have determined to take the matter in hand. It may be that the sum of money to be charged will be a large one; but, as compared with the sum we are prepared to spend on elementary education, it need not be considered very large. I hope the Government will not be niggardly in dealing with this great question, and that they will do their best to carry it to a conclusion.

SIR RICHARD H. PAGET (Somerset, Wells) said, they had in the Resolution a reference to a State-aided system, and he trusted there would be no doubt about the meaning of the phrase or as to its intention. The teachers would be glad to learn that it was the intention of the Government to take this matter in hand. He trusted they would do so at once, so that adequate provision might be made for the Public Service. The matter was one that required attention to be drawn to it, and he was gratified at the expression of sympathy with the teachers that night. The teachers had the deepest interest the

proceedings of that evening. They would be rejoiced to know that the Resolution had the support of Her Majesty's Government, and that it was to be passed without a vote being taken. It was a duty absolutely incumbent upon the Government to deal with this matter, because it was one calling for immediate attention. It was only right that those who had the interests of children and of the community in their charge should be encouraged, and that they should be rewarded for services rendered in earlier days when they were able to perform the duties of their office; they should not be allowed to work in a manner which suggested that they had no provision for old age after years of toil. He had noted with satisfaction the remarks of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, but he should like to ask the right hon. Gentleman how he arrived at a total of £25,000,000.

**SIR W. HARCOURT:** The figures of the Committee cover £18,000,000, but I did not include a number of contingencies that would have to be provided for.

**SIR R. H. PAGET** said, he did not quite understand whether the sum indicated by the right hon. Gentleman included the cases which the Committee did not entertain. He would like to see the details. But whatever the sum was, he hoped the right hon. Gentleman was prepared to go forward with the scheme. Was he prepared? That was the question that would be asked all over the country. He trusted to find before long that a substantial practical measure would be forthcoming, and that it would be carried into law.

**MR. COURTNEY** (Cornwall, Bodmin): I have only a few words to say upon this question, which has occupied my attention for the last few years. I cannot recognise as perfectly accurate the accounts which have been given to the House of the position of the teachers? Those teachers who came under the Minute of 1846 had great hopes, and even the certainty of a pension held out to them. But the scheme was modified by the Minute of 1832, which brought the amount of the award to a definite sum, and the teachers suffered a great

deal of injustice for a long time afterwards. When I was at the Treasury I had the satisfaction of redressing that injustice by admitting the claims of the teachers who came in under the 1846 Minute. It is a mistake, therefore, to assume that these teachers suffer any injustice now. With respect to those who came in subsequently their claims were admitted. I am glad to find from the remarks of the Vice President of the Council that he has been able to admit the second-class teachers, if not to equal benefits, at least to a considerable increase of pension. I would say that that claim is recognised as a matter of expediency. The late Parliament had a very strong feeling against it. I am glad this matter has arisen now, because it illustrates for us the fundamental principle that in the organisation of the Civil Service, if you want an efficient Service you must recognise the necessity of making it efficient by having a system of pensions. It is so with respect to teachers. It is impossible to have an efficient system unless you do this. It is impossible to dismiss a teacher who is past good work unless he has something to fall back upon, and that is the ground, and the great ground, upon which we should agree to allow a teacher to obtain a pension on reaching a certain age. I am pleased to think that my right hon. Friend the Vice President of the Council—and no man is more competent to deal with educational matters—is going to grapple with the question. Those who pay the piper have a right to call the tune, and if we are to recognise these persons as servants of the State we should be prepared to give the Education Office and the Minister in charge of it some control over them. It seems to me that the step about to be taken does not appear to be fully comprehended. It is, however, a step which will revolutionise the whole system, and I may conclude by saying that it has my hearty approval.

\***MR. J. G. TALBOT** (Oxford University) said, the matter which they were discussing was now treated in a much more liberal spirit than it was last year. It was, in his opinion, just as important to provide for teachers suffering from bad health, and who were obliged to retire from overwork, as for those who were

entitled to retire at a certain age. This was a matter which he had tried (unsuccessfully) to urge upon the Committee of which he was a Member last year, who had considered the question of Teachers' Pensions. He hoped it would receive the favourable consideration of the Government. If people were allowed to struggle on trying to teach when they were unable to do so, they would bring injury upon themselves and upon their families, and, of course, it followed that the Public Service would suffer also. He congratulated the hon. Member who had brought forward the Resolution on the success which he had attained, and hoped the matter would receive immediate attention from the Government.

Question put, and negatived.

Words added.

Main Question, as amended, put, and agreed to.

Resolved, That, in the opinion of this House, it is desirable that a National State-aided system of Superannuation for Teachers in Public Elementary Schools in England and Wales should be established at an early date.

SUPPLY—Committee upon Monday next.

SEAMEN'S PROVISION BILL.—(No. 191.)

SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."

\*COLONEL SIR E. S. HILL (Bristol, S.): I have no objection to the principle of this Bill. Sailors should be properly fed, and this should not be left to chance. The scale in the Bill was not more liberal than had been used for years by many ships. But what I do object to is, that this Bill, affecting the vast shipping interests of the country, should be attempted to be rushed through Parliament without giving any opportunity for consideration. The Bill in question was only printed on Saturday, and could not possibly be in the hands of output shipowners till Monday at earliest, and

*Mr. J. G. Talbot*

it was put down for Second Reading on Tuesday. This is to treat shipowners with very scant respect, and I hope the hon. Member in charge of the Bill will not press for the Second Reading until due time for consideration has been given.

MR. J. H. WILSON (Middlesbrough) hoped the hon. Gentleman would withdraw his objection. The Bill was brought in by the shipowners themselves. The Shipowner's Committee was in perfect agreement with it.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE (MR. MUNDELLA, Sheffield, Brightside): The Board of Trade has no objection to the Bill.

MR. J. H. WILSON said, the Bill was promoted by shipowners themselves, and ought not to be objected to.

MR. COSMO BONSOR asked that it should be allowed to stand for a week.

Second Reading deferred till Monday next.

COINAGE (No. 2) BILL.—(No. 221.)

SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."

\*MR. G. W. BALFOUR (Leeds, Central) said, in reference to this Bill, he should like to know whether the sum required for the purposes of the Bill would appear on the Estimates?

THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Sir J. T. HIBBERT, Oldham): The sum required for the purposes of this Bill will be payable out of the Consolidated Fund and will not appear on the Estimates.

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a second time, and committed for Monday next.

**MOTIONS.****POST OFFICE (ABERDEEN AND THE SHETLAND ISLANDS MAIL CONTRACT).****RESOLUTION.**

Motion made, and Question proposed,  
 "That the Contract dated the 11th day of November, 1892, entered into with the North of Scotland and Orkney and Shetland Steam Navigation Company, for the performance of the Mail Service between Aberdeen and the Shetland Islands, be approved."—(*Sir John Hibbert.*)

**MR. T. M. HEALY** (Louth, N.) said, he did not wish to object to the Contract, but he did think that they should not hear so much about objections to the extension of postal privileges to other portions of the Kingdom. He did not know why Shetland should be favoured whilst other portions of the Three Kingdoms were told that they should not have adequate facilities on the ground of expense.

\***SIR J. T. HIBBERT:** I admit that in all cases of this kind the matter should be fairly considered and fairly dealt with. The hon. and learned Gentleman probably refers to Wexford. [**Mr. T. M. HEALY** assented.] I can assure him that the circumstances differ; but I shall be happy to consider any case upon its own merits.

Motion agreed to.

**POST OFFICE (ADEN AND ZANZIBAR MAIL CONTRACT).**

Resolved, That the Contract dated the 18th day of November, 1892, entered into with the British India Steam Navigation Company, for the performance of the Mail Service between Aden and Zanzibar, be approved.—(*Sir John Hibbert.*)

**RAILWAY SERVANTS (HOURS OF LABOUR) (NO. 2) BILL.**

On Motion of Sir Seymour King, Bill to shorten the Hours of Labour of Railway Servants, ordered to be brought in by Sir Seymour King,  
**VOL. IX. [FOURTH SERIES.]**

Sir John Gorst, Mr. Webster, Mr. Butcher, Mr. Cayzer, and Mr. Agg-Gardner.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 226.]

**LICENSING REFORM BILL.**

On Motion of Sir Henry Roscoe, Bill to amend the Law relating to Licences for the Sale of Intoxicating Liquors, ordered to be brought in by Sir Henry Roscoe, Mr. Jacob Bright, Mr. Crosfield, Mr. Leake, Mr. Mather, and Mr. Roundell.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 227.]

**BOARDS OF CONCILIATION BILL.**

On Motion of Sir John Lubbock, Bill to confer additional powers on Boards of Conciliation and Arbitration, ordered to be brought in by Sir John Lubbock, Mr. Charles Fenwick, Mr. Howell, Mr. Mather, Mr. Montagu, Sir Francis Powell, and Sir Albert Rollit.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 228.]

**STIPENDIARY MAGISTRATES APPOINTMENT BILL.**

On Motion of Mr. Lloyd Morgan, Bill to enable County Councils to provide for the appointment of Stipendiary Magistrates, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Lloyd Morgan, Mr. Labouchere, Mr. Lockwood, Mr. Philipps, and Mr. Abel Thomas.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 229.]

**HANDLOOM WEAVERS (IRELAND) BILL.**

On Motion of Colonel Saunderson, Bill to amend the Law relating to Handloom Weavers in Ireland, ordered to be brought in by Colonel Saunderson, Colonel Waring, Mr. O'Neill, and Mr. Macartney.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 230.]

**PUBLIC HOUSES, HOURS OF CLOSING (SCOTLAND) BILL.**

On Motion of Dr. Cameron, Bill to amend "The Public Houses, Hours of Closing (Scotland) Act, 1887," ordered to be brought in by Dr. Cameron, Mr. M'Lagan, Mr. John Wilson (Govan), Mr. Buchanan, Mr. Hunter, and Mr. Leng.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 231.]

**POLICE ACTS AMENDMENT BILL. (No. 105.)**

Considered in Committee.  
 (In the Committee.)

Clause 1.

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Committee report Progress; to sit again upon Monday next.

**PUBLIC LIBRARIES ACT (1892) AMENDMENT BILL.—(No. 96.)**

Read the third time, and passed.

**BARBED WIRE FENCES BILL.—(No. 176.)**

Read a second time, and committed for Monday next.

**GOVERNMENT OF IRELAND BILL (FINANCIAL EFFECT.)**

Copy ordered—

“Of the Return showing the effect of the Financial Proposals in the Government of Ireland Bill as regards Ireland, on the basis of the Estimated Revenue and Expenditure for 1892-3.”—(*Sir John Hibbert.*)

Copy presented accordingly; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 91.]

**HOUSE OF COMMONS.**

Return ordered—

“Showing the names of all present Members of the House of Commons who are in receipt of public money from the National Exchequer, whether in the form of salary, pay, pension, or allowance of any kind, or who have received commutation in respect thereof, under the Commutation Acts, with separate columns showing the names of the constituencies for which they sit, the amounts they receive or have commuted, with the amount of the commutation money, and the name of the office or nature of the service for which the money is or has been paid (in continuation of Parliamentary Paper, No. 396, of Session 1888).”—(*Mr. Fenwick.*)

**CIVIL SERVICES AND REVENUE DEPARTMENTS, 1893-4.**

Memorandum on Estimates,—Paper [presented 23rd February] to be printed. [No. 90.]

**RAILWAY RATES.**

Copy presented,—of Lists handed by the Secretary of Railway Companies' Association to the President of the Board of Trade, showing Articles which are charged at Rates other than the Ordinary Class Rates [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

**LIGHTHOUSE ILLUMINANTS.**

Return presented,—relative thereto [ordered 14th February; *Mr. Clancy*]; to lie upon the Table.

**ARMY ACT, 1881.**

Copy presented,—of Alteration of Rules of Procedure under the Army Act, 1881 [by Act]; to lie upon the Table.

**FINANCIAL RELATIONS (ENGLAND, SCOTLAND, AND IRELAND).**

Return presented,—relative thereto [ordered 10th February; *Mr. Clancy*]; to lie upon the Table.

**TRADE MARKS PROTECTION (COMMERCIAL, No. 1, 1893).**

Copy presented,—of Despatch from Her Majesty's Charge d'Affaires at Berlin, inclosing a German Draft Bill for the Protection of Trade Marks [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

**COLONIAL REPORTS (ANNUAL) (NEWFOUNDLAND).**

Copy presented,—of Annual Report for 1891, No. 67 (Newfoundland) (in continuation of Colonial Report (Annual) (No. 34) [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

House adjourned at a quarter after Twelve o'clock till Monday next.

## HOUSE OF LORDS,

Monday, 27th February 1893.

Several Lords—took the Oath.

SAT FIRST.

Lord Northbourne, after the death of his father.

## PUBLIC AUTHORITIES PROTECTION

BILL [H.L.]—(No. 6.)

COMMITTEE.

House in Committee (according to Order).

Clause 1.

LORD ASHBOURNE: My Lords, I have had a conversation with my noble and learned Friend on the Woolsack, and I think it will be more convenient to leave out the sub-section of Clause 1 relating to venue, leaving the venue to be settled by the ordinary operation of the law, as in every other case.

THE LORD CHANCELLOR (Lord HERSHELL): My Lords, I think there is no absolute necessity for this sub-section of the clause, inasmuch as there is sufficient power under the provisions of the Judicature Act for satisfactorily dealing with the case.

Amendment made; Standing Committee negatived; the Report of the Amendment to be received To-morrow.

## SALE OF GOODS BILL [H.L.]—(No. 8.)

COMMITTEE.

House in Committee (according to Order).

THE LORD CHANCELLOR: My Lords, as this Bill has been already through the Standing Committee, I beg to move that the Standing Committee be negatived.

Motion agreed to.

## STATUTE LAW REVISION (No. 1) BILL.

[H. L.]—(No. 9.)

SECOND READING.

Order of the Day for the Second Reading, read.

THE LORD CHANCELLOR: My Lords, this is one of the ordinary Bills

for the revision of the Statute Law. It does not call for special remark, and I beg to move that the Bill be read a second time.

Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2<sup>a</sup>."—(*The Lord Chancellor*.)

Motion agreed to; Bill read 2<sup>a</sup> accordingly.

THE LORD CHANCELLOR: My Lords, during the last Session of Parliament a Joint Committee of both Houses was appointed to consider the subject of Statute Law Revision, and they made a Report in which they recommended that in future years a Joint Committee of both Houses should always be appointed for the purpose of dealing with these Statute Law Revision Bills, as that was likely to be the best means of securing a thorough examination of them, and the certainty that before being passed they would be put into proper shape.

Moved to resolve,

"That it is desirable that all Statute Law Revision Bills of the present Session be referred to a Joint Committee of both Houses of Parliament."—(*The Lord Chancellor*.)

Motion agreed to.

Ordered, That a message be sent to the Commons to communicate this Resolution, and desire their concurrence.

## ARMY RATIONS.

## QUESTION. OBSERVATIONS.

THE EARL OF STRAFFORD asked the Under Secretary of State for War whether the system advocated between the years 1888 and 1890 by Colonel C. J. Burnett, A.A.G., and Brigade Surgeon Lieutenant-Colonel Notter, of messing in the Army, had been tried at Aldershot and other military centres; whether such changes had been approved of by the various Military Authorities and the rank and file of the Army; and whether any official Report on the subject had been or could be presented to Parliament for the information of the public? He said, he need scarcely remind the Under Secretary of State for War and their Lordships who took an interest in Army matters that during the last few years among the grievances in the interior economy of the Army the amount of rations enjoyed by the private soldier had been the subject of discussion in the

Press and elsewhere. It had been stated that the 1lb. of bread per day and the 1½lb. of meat, coupled with the 3d. per day stoppage for groceries and other items, was not sufficient to give the private soldier a good dinner, much less to provide him with something for his supper and for breakfast the following morning. About three years ago two very efficient officers—Colonel Burnett (at present Assistant Adjutant General at Aldershot) and Brigade Surgeon Lieutenant-Colonel Notter—had been led to the conclusion that the fault rested not so much with the quantity of rations provided as with the way in which they were cooked; and, after making due inquiry and many experiments, they found that the amount of rations was ample, providing the cooking was good, and they had established three excellent kitchens at Aldershot Camp. With the assistance of Major Ferguson and Sergeant-Major Thompson (the Sergeant Cook) they had elaborated a system by which the three great essentials of good cooking, whether in private houses or in barracks—punctuality, efficiency, and economy—had been obtained. He believed the Under Secretary of State would be able to tell their Lordships that the private soldier now enjoyed sufficient for breakfast, a good dinner, and enough for his supper; and he therefore asked whether the noble Lord was in a position to give the House and the public any information on the subject; and whether the statements in the Press were correct, that this new system had been tried with advantage at Aldershot and other military centres?

LORD SANDHURST: My Lords, I must thank my noble Friend for having at my request postponed his question from last Friday to suit my personal convenience. I will, first of all, reply categorically to the three questions which are embodied in the notice of my noble Friend. A system of experimental messing, growing out of Colonel Burnett's proposals, has been taught at the School of Cookery at Aldershot during the last two years. It is in operation among the troops there, and is being extended throughout the troops at home, as far as it is found applicable at different stations. The changes have been approved by the authorities and by the soldiers. No special Report has been

presented to Parliament, nor does there appear at this stage any necessity to do so. Though it does not appear necessary to present a Report to Parliament, I might, perhaps, with your permission, and without entering into unnecessary detail, give a brief sketch of the changes that have taken place. It will interest my noble Friend, who, I am glad, has put his notice on the Paper, and perhaps your Lordships, who are generally interested in the welfare of the private soldier, and I hope also it may create some interest outside. It may be within the recollection of some that before the days of Lord Cardwell at the War Office the pay of the private soldier was 1s. 3d. a day; of this he paid 4½d. for rations supplied by the Government. He therefore had 10½d. to spend, but of this 10½d. there were stoppages to the amount of 3½d. for messing and washing, so that he really had 7d. a day. When Lord Cardwell was Secretary of State in 1873 he gave a free ration of ¾lb. of meat and 1lb. of bread, but reduced the pay to 1s., and of this 3d. was stopped for messing—i.e., for groceries, &c., so that the soldier under this plan had 9d. instead of 7d. per diem. Many years later, about 1888 or 1889, the question of soldiers' food again excited attention, it being the opinion of some that the ration of ¾lb. of meat for dinner was insufficient. Mr. Stanhope authorised a Committee, composed of military men, one or two of whom were in the House of Commons, to consider the whole subject. The result of the deliberations of that Committee was the opinion that if proper attention was paid to economy the actual supply of bread and meat, supplemented by the articles procured by stoppages, was sufficient. The case merely resolves into this—it is a question of housekeeping—whether there is to be good housekeeping for the soldier, or, as in former days, no housekeeping at all. Two simple domestic kitchen utensils—namely, the stock-pot and the dripping-pan, were then introduced into the military kitchen, which had hitherto been conspicuous by their absence. Under the energetic influence of Sir E. Wood, and the keen intelligence and spirit of one of his Assistant Adjutant Generals, Colonel Burnett, the School of Cookery at Aldershot exhibited signs of a new vigour and of real competency for

the work for which it was first instituted. The School of Cookery now has a sergeant-major as senior non-commissioned officer and instructor, and he has three non-commissioned officers as assistants. There are educated at the school per annum 81 non-commissioned officers of the Regular Army, and 37 of the permanent staff of the Militia. The length of the course is four months for the Regulars and three months for the Militia; and, further, after the men return to their respective regiments they undergo an additional probation of three months before they receive their certificates as master cooks. The Director General of the Army Medical Department is so impressed with the value of the system that he has applied to send an officer and non-commissioned officer of the Army Medical Department as an experiment to see whether any improvement can be made in the food for hospital patients, and, as far as my opinion can be worth anything, I venture to think a hospital cookery class might be established with very great advantage. And now for the cooking itself. After a series of experiments Sir E. Wood drew up a Memorandum for the guidance of commanding officers of battalion corps and companies, and all whom it might concern. The object set forth in the Memorandum is economy in the messing of the soldier, and, by economy, to vary and increase his scale of diet, and improvement in the cooking of the rations. By the aid of the stock-pot the bones, which have been hitherto thrown away, are boiled for a period not exceeding three days, care being taken to label each net of bones on the day they are put in, and with the addition of peas, lentils, &c., procurable at a small cost, excellent soup is obtainable. Then, my Lords, all skimmings are removed from meats, stews, dishes which go by the name of "sea-pies," and curries, those trimmings are turned into dripping, and to that really excellent and rich gravies are added which make the food more palatable. When the whole of the stock is not required for soup and gravies, which under proper management it never is, it is used in place of water for stews, curries, &c., thereby greatly increasing the nutritious quality of the food, and, in addition, giving it a flavour which would have been wanting under the old methods.

The bones, after they have fully performed their work in the stock-pot, are sold at 2s. per cwt., and the money credited to the company. Formerly the bones were thrown away without ever being subjected to the stock-pot. Soup can be served with the dinners, or free in the evening, from the recreation-room, or some other battalion institution. The process now in practice of boning the meat has had the effect of better cooking and greater economy. But while the bones perform a considerable part in the cooking for the soldiers the dripping also takes an important place. I am, sorry, my Lords, to have to enter into these details, but economy is really the essence of the question. This dripping, which was formerly thrown away, is now economised with the greatest advantage. The dripping-pan, of course, provides the fatty element necessary for good pies and puddings and other cooking purposes, and while the removal of this fatty matter tends to economy it also renders the food more sightly and palatable. I mentioned just now that bones formerly thrown away are now, after being used, sold at 2s. per cwt., which would no doubt come to a considerable sum per battalion. The value of the dripping at 4d. per lb. in a battalion of 800 men may be estimated at £160 per annum, while if you calculate for the whole Home Army it is estimated that the saving on the dripping alone would be £20,000. Now, I wish to add that this money so saved is not, as the term goes, sweated out of the soldier, but goes back to him in improved and more varied diet, and thereby makes his life more comfortable. The treatment of the bread ration, which was formerly not entirely satisfactory, has also been attended to. This really appears to have been more a matter of issue than anything else. Formerly issued overnight, the bread became dry and hard; now I understand that the regulation is that it should be issued twice a day, early in the morning and just before dinner, so that the men do not have hard bread for their tea. Another advantage of this plan is that it saves the soldier's pocket, for he used often to buy bread for tea as the rations had become uneatable. The soldier now saves the money he formerly spent for that purpose: it is carefully



saved for him for his breakfast. What money is now saved is laid out in what are called extras. In addition to the Government rations of bread and meat the soldier is put under a stoppage for messing or groceries. That, of course, has nothing to do with the Government ; it is a matter of regimental arrangement. At one time, I believe, they amounted to 5d. a day, never less than 3d. Now, by Sir E. Wood's Memorandum, 3d. is the recognised sum. Under the head of groceries in that Memorandum came 37 different articles, such as bacon, tea, coffee, eggs, vegetables, herbs, oatmeal, and a variety of things which I need not repeat to your Lordships. These should be sold to the soldier from the canteen at cost price. As consumption proceeds, the debits or credits are entered up daily in the soldier's grocery books by the colour-sergeant, and signed by the officer commanding the Company. At the risk of detaining your Lordships I should just like to compare the daily bill of fare of the soldier in former days with that provided under the suggestions in Sir E. Wood's Memorandum. In most cases for breakfast there used to be only bread and a bowl of tea ; what was by courtesy called dinner consisted of meat and potatoes, the appetising variety being that one day it was a case of baked meat and roast potatoes, the next day roast meat and baked potatoes. The meal at tea time was about as tempting as the breakfast. The circumstances now are, indeed, greatly changed. In going through the School of Cookery I have had the opportunity of seeing the method pursued with the rations from the commencement until they are finally served out to the men. Here is a diet sheet giving the meals of the West Yorkshire Regiment, 1st Battalion, now stationed at Aldershot, and I will just read from it the diet of one or two of the Companies. A Company : Breakfast—tea, bread, porridge ; dinner—brown currie stew, potatoes, and rice date pudding ; tea—tea, brawn, bread. The diet of the "C" Company is :—Breakfast—tea, bread, cheese ; dinner—brown stew and potatoes, plain raisin pudding ; tea—tea, dripping, bread. Another is :—Breakfast—tea, bread and butter or dripping ; dinner—Irish stew, potatoes, and pudding ; tea—tea, brawn and bread. That shows a considerable variety in the bill

*Lord Sandhurst*

of fare for one day, Saturday, and of course the various items are interchangeable day by day. I have had the pleasure of going over this School of Cookery. It was most interesting. I can testify to the excellence of some of the provisions, for I tasted some. The soup I considered excellent, and the cooking generally favourably impressed me. I saw all the various processes, from the time the meat was taken from the cooking apparatus until it was served out in the barrack-room ; and to show that Saturday's meal was nothing out of the common, I may state that I quote from a regimental return which was made out in the orderly-room for the previous week and posted up in the cook-house. I visited more than one regimental kitchen. I understand that the new system gives great satisfaction to the men. A noble and gallant Lord who sits in this House (Lord Beaumont) commands a distinguished regiment, the 20th Hussars, now at Aldershot. Perhaps, if he is in his place, he may feel inclined to give us the results of his experience ; but I may say when I showed him my noble Friend's question the other day he spoke highly of the system, and said it was in operation in his regiment. I see other noble and gallant Lords present, and I think it would be of advantage if they would favour us with their views upon the subject. Sir Evelyn Wood is so impressed with the success of the system that he contemplates starting a class for soldiers' wives, with the view of improving the house-keeping arrangements of the married soldiers, and enabling them to make as much out of the ration money as they can. The fame and success of the School of Cookery is not limited to the Army. In May, 1892, the Committee of the Universal School of Cookery and Food Association asked for the assistance of the staff of the School of Cookery at their Exhibition in Baker Street. His Royal Highness the Commander-in-Chief sanctioned the proposal. The men gained two silver medals, the bronze medal, and five diplomas. Last winter Baroness Burdett-Coutts, who is interested in the matter, asked Sir Evelyn Wood if those connected with our school might lecture and demonstrate to the pupils at the Westminster Technical Institute. Sir E. Wood agreed, and as their services

have been again asked for it is only fair to suppose that their efforts were successful. In camp, when the men are under canvas, an extra allowance is given of a quarter of a pound of meat to provide a meat breakfast, and on active service an extra half pound and a quarter of a pound of bread. Of course, it is easy for a critic to say that this is all very fine on paper; but I beg to assure your Lordships that not only is it capable of being carried out, but it is being carried out in many places in the way I have demonstrated, and commanding officers, I am told, are anxious to carry it out. It may be said that this can be done at Aldershot but nowhere else. But the system was in operation at Mullingar in the battalion under Colonel Burnett's command, and it succeeded there. It was said it might be done in a place like Mullingar, where provisions are cheap, but could never be done at Aldershot. It has been done at Aldershot, and I hope it will be found practicable to use the system wherever local facilities are studied and will permit. No doubt circumstances will be found to differ in different localities; but it appears to be mainly a question of supervision, and, of course, where supervision is not exercised, or in fact wherever duty is not properly performed, nothing will succeed. There is no doubt that a vast improvement has been effected in the messing of the private soldier: money is being saved to him, and no extra expense caused to the State. Had it been thought advisable to add to the present three-quarters another quarter of a pound of meat an increased cost of about £230,000 per annum would have been incurred. I venture to think that the improved state of things will stimulate recruiting for the Army, and I believe that opinion to be held by many officers in high positions. As your Lordships are aware, that distinguished officer, Sir E. Wood, commands at Aldershot, and it is under his authority, and owing to his energy and constant thought for the welfare of the soldiers under his command, that first the experiments, and then the system, have been carried out. But I may add that to Colonel Burnett, his Assistant Adjutant General, high praise is due for the way in which the scheme in detail has been carried out, and for the enthusiastic spirit, combined with tact and perseverance, by which he has over-

come difficulties as they presented themselves. I venture to submit that to both these distinguished officers, the chief and subordinate, gratitude is due from the private soldier and the authorities.

#### CHURCH PATRONAGE BILL [H.L.].

A Bill to amend the law respecting the transfer and exercise of church patronage, and the avoidance of benefices—Was presented by the Lord Archbishop of Canterbury; read 1<sup>st</sup>; and to be printed. (No. 24.)

#### PUBLIC LIBRARIES ACT (1892) AMENDMENT BILL.

Brought from the Commons; read 1<sup>st</sup>; and to be printed. (No. 25.)

House adjourned at five minutes before Five o'clock, till To-morrow, a quarter past Ten o'clock.

### HOUSE OF COMMONS.

*Monday, 27th February 1893.*

#### QUESTIONS.

##### SHEERNESS DOCKYARD MUD.

MAJOR RASCH (Essex, S.E.): In consequence of a communication I have received from the Admiralty, I beg to withdraw my question to the Civil Lord of the Admiralty as to whether he can now state when the Report on the deposit of mud from Sheerness Dockyard on to the Essex fishing grounds will be produced?

##### THE RAILWAYS AND THE GOVERNMENT TELEGRAPHS.

MR. JOHN ELLIS (Nottingham, Rushcliffe): I beg to ask the Postmaster General whether his attention has been called to the sentence in the Report of the Revenue Estimates Committee of 1888 respecting the cost to the public from the "enormous increase of services gratuitously performed for the Railway Companies," by reason of their increased use of the privilege of sending certain telegrams free granted them in 1870; what was the number of these messages in the years 1871 and 1892; and also of

the public messages in those years ; what is the present state of the negotiations on the subject referred to by the late Postmaster General, in reply to a question in this House on the 22nd February, 1892 ; and whether, pending any settlement of the question, care will be taken that the privilege shall not be increased, or extended to new undertakings by any Private Bills ?

**THE POSTMASTER GENERAL** (Mr. A. MORLEY, Nottingham, E.) : This matter has been engaging my close attention. Statistics of the number of telegrams sent free of charge for the Railway Companies in 1871 can only be given as regards the Companies of England and Wales. In the case of these Companies the number sent in 1871 was 87,201 ; in 1892 it had risen to 1,329,531, an increase of more than fifteen-fold. During the same period telegrams of all other descriptions rose from 9,573,548 to 57,871,429, an increase of about six-fold. The negotiations to which the hon. Member refers have resulted in the commutation of the privilege into a right to send a fixed number of messages and words per annum in the case of the Midland and Manchester, Sheffield, and Lincolnshire Companies. Negotiations with other Companies are in progress, and it is hoped that all the Companies will recognise that it is desirable, in their own as well as in the public interest, to accept the principle of commutation. As regards Private Bill Legislation, Her Majesty's Government will, of course, watch closely any Bills introduced into Parliament tending to the extension of the privilege referred to.

#### THE SUNNINGWELL CHARITIES.

\***MR. DODD** (Essex, Maldon) : I beg to ask the Parliamentary Charity Commissioner whether the Charity Commissioners have considered the objections to the proposed scheme for the regulation of the Charities and Poor's Land of Sunningwell, Berkshire ; and, if so, whether they have decided to make the scheme accord with the general wish of the ratepayers, including the principal landed proprietor of the village ; and, if it has been arrived at, what the final determination of the Commissioners is ?

*Mr. John Ellis*

\***THE PARLIAMENTARY CHARITY COMMISSIONER** (Mr. T. E. ELLIS, Merionethshire) : The objections to the proposed scheme for the regulation of the Sunningwell Charities have been considered. With a view to meet the wishes of the ratepayers generally, the Commissioners have decided to modify it in the following particulars :—by providing (1) that the number of representative trustees shall be four, to be elected by ballot on the plan of "one man one vote," the election to be held in the evening, so as to enable the labourers to be present ; (2) that one only of two co-optative trustees (an existing trustee) shall be named in the scheme ; and (3) that the buildings erected for a school and adapted for a master's residence, being subject to an educational trust, shall be occupied by the trustees for the purpose of a public elementary school, on condition that rates, insurance, and repairs of the premises be provided otherwise than from the income of the endowment.

\***MR. DODD** : Might I ask whether, under similar circumstances, similar schemes will be drawn ?

\***MR. T. E. ELLIS** : Each scheme will be considered on its merits. I trust the representative element will always be in the majority.

**MR. COURTNEY** (Cornwall, Bodmin) : Does the principle of "one man one vote," as applied in this case, mean that the ratepayers are to vote for one trustee only, or to give one vote each to as many trustees as are to be elected ?

\***MR. T. E. ELLIS** : One vote each to as many trustees as are to be elected.

**MR. COURTNEY** : That is not one man one vote.

#### KEW GARDENS.

**MR. JUSTIN M'CARTHY** (Longford, N.) : I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether, with reference to his recent courteous promise to Mr. F. G. Heath, and to a similar promise made in an interview given to Mr. Heath by the First Commissioner of Works, that the best consideration should be given by the Government to the question of an earlier opening of Kew Gardens, any decision had been arrived at ; and, if so, whether it was in the direction of a

favourable relaxation of the present rules in the interests of the general public?

**THE FIRST COMMISSIONER OF WORKS** (Mr. SHAW LEFEVRE, Bradford, Central): My right hon. Friend has asked me to answer this. The question has, as promised, been carefully examined. It has been ascertained that the opening of Kew Gardens to the general public in the early morning instead of at noon would entail a considerable increase in the cost of maintaining and managing the Gardens. At present, although the general public are not admitted till after 12, any persons who desire to study the plants and collections in the Gardens, from a scientific and horticultural point of view, are able to do so in the morning by applying to the Director. Very large numbers of persons avail themselves of this privilege, and are allowed to handle and examine the plants in a manner which would not be possible if the general public were admitted. They value this privilege very much, and I have received a Petition signed by many scientific men praying that no change may be made in the present regulations. It is also the fact that on Bank Holidays, when the Gardens are open at 10, comparatively few persons enter them till after noon. Under all the circumstances, the Government has not felt that a strong case has been made out for incurring the additional expenditure.

#### UNCOMMUTED PERPETUAL PENSIONS.

**MR. HANBURY** (Preston): I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether all perpetual pensions have now been commuted; and, if not, how many and which of them remain uncommuted, and why; what is the total amount paid for the commutation of such pensions, and the total annual value of those not yet commuted; and in what cases have payments been made, and to what amount, in respect of annual sums granted to meet specified expenses and outgoings on the part of the pensioner, which expenses and outgoings had for some time ceased, and the allowance for which had still been paid to the pensioner?

**\*THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER** (Sir W. HARCOURT, Derby): All the pensions have not been commuted. Those which were not commuted

in 1887 are set forth in the Report of the Select Committee of that year. Since then, three pensions have been commuted—namely, the Duke of St. Alban's, Lord Downshire's and Lord Exmouth's. The Minute relating to these cases was laid on the Table in July, 1890. No further commutation has been effected. Negotiations have taken place in some cases, which have fallen through. In the case of Lord Rodney, the Court disallowed the terms agreed to—namely, 27 years' purchase. A Minute relating to this case was presented last year. The amount paid for commutation appears in the Parliamentary Returns. The annual value of the remaining pensions is about £8,500. The last part of the question seems only to apply to the cases of the Duke of St. Alban's, as Master of Hawks, and Lord Downshire, the particulars of which will be found in the Minute presented to Parliament.

**MR. HANBURY**: Do these particulars give details showing what was paid for the actual pension and what was paid for the outgoings and special expenses to which I refer in my question? Do they give these items separately.

**\*SIR W. HARCOURT**: I do not know. I will inquire, and try and get any further information the hon. Member may desire.

#### THE NEW REGISTRATION BILL.

**MR. JACKSON** (Leeds, N.): I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board whether, under the scheme of the Government for the alteration of the Registration Law, it is intended to retain the services of the assistant overseers for preparing the lists of voters, or whether it is intended to dispense with their services?

**\*THE PRESIDENT OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD** (Mr. H. H. FOWLER, Wolverhampton, E.): The Bill contemplates that the duties at present performed by overseers and assistant overseers shall be transferred to the District Registrar. Not only is there no reason why the assistant overseer should not be appointed to that office, but there is a clause in the Bill which specially points him out as suitable for the appointment.

### CHRIST'S HOSPITAL BOARDING SCHOOLS.

**MR. BONSOR** (Surrey, Wimbledon) : I beg to ask the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education whether 1,000 acres of dairy land in Sussex, 37 miles from London, have been contracted for as the site for the boarding schools for 700 boys, 350 girls, and 120 infants of the future Christ's Hospital, which, by the scheme approved by Her Majesty, are to be built within a convenient distance from the City of London; whether the whole Governing Body of 43 set up by the scheme approved of such location for a metropolitan foundation of three centuries' life in the City of London itself; and whether he will be good enough to give the reasons for such a choice?

\***MR. T. E. ELLIS** : I am asked by my right hon. Friend to reply to this. The Council of Almoners of Christ's Hospital, with the consent of the Charity Commissioners, have concluded the purchase of about 1,000 acres of land near Horsham, on which their new boarding schools are to be built. The Charity Commissioners have no knowledge whether any members of the Governing Body dissented from the purchase. The choice was that of a Governing Body, eminently qualified to act for the best, and the Commissioners saw no ground for withholding their assent to it.

\***MR. BONSOR** : Does the hon. Gentleman consider 37 miles a "convenient distance from London"?

\***MR. T. E. ELLIS** : The distance is getting less every year. The Charity Commissioners have specially considered this matter, and felt that they could not interfere with the deliberate decision of the Council of Christ's Hospital.

### LAND OWNERS IN THE METROPOLIS.

\***MR. WHITMORE** (Chelsea) : I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board whether he will institute the inquiries necessary to prepare a Return of owners of land in the Metropolis, in supplement of the Returns of owners of land in the United Kingdom; and whether, if fresh legislation is required to enable such a Return to be obtained, he will introduce a Bill for this purpose?

\***MR. H. H. FOWLER** : The difficulty which would attend the obtaining of an

accurate Return of the owners of lands and premises in the Metropolis, with the extent and gross estimated rental of the lands owned by them, would be enormous, and the expense which any attempt to obtain such a Return would involve would be very serious. I cannot undertake to propose legislation for this purpose.

### ALLOTMENTS IN LINCOLNSHIRE.

**MR. CHANNING** (Northampton, E.) : I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury, as representing the Commissioners of Woods and Forests, whether on the Crown estates in the parish of Moulton, Lincolnshire, the rent of farm land has been reduced to £1 an acre, whilst the Commissioners have hitherto declined to make a similar reduction in the rent of the land let to the Sanitary Authority for allotments; and whether the Commissioners will re-consider this decision, and let land for the purposes of allotments at the fair agricultural rent?

**THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY** (Sir J. T. HIBBERT, Oldham) : The farm from which the allotment land was taken is a straggling one, being some four miles in length, and comprises land of a most varied description, some of which is not only far from accessible but is also very liable to floods. That taken for allotments is valuable and is near the village, and having regard to the allowance which it was necessary to make to the tenant in order to obtain possession of it, and to the outlay necessary to adapt the land for letting in allotments, the Commissioners of Woods could not let it at less than the rent fixed without incurring an actual loss.

### DUNFANAGHY POSTAL SERVICE.

**MR. T. D. SULLIVAN** (Donegal, W.) : I beg to ask the Postmaster General if he has received a Memorial from inhabitants of the districts of Dunfanaghy and Creeslough, County Donegal, praying for an evening delivery of letters at villages on the route between Letterkenny and Dunfanaghy; and whether he will be pleased to accede to the prayer of said Memorial?

**MR. A. MORLEY** : I have received the Memorial to which the hon. Member refers, and I should have been very glad if the circumstances had enabled me to

accede to its prayer. It appears, however, that no arrangement could at present be made for the purpose, except at an outlay far in excess of the Revenue. The subject shall again be considered a few months' hence.

#### TRAWLING ON THE SCOTCH COAST.

**MR. CROMBIE** (Kincardineshire) : I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland whether the Government intend to act on the recommendation of the last Fishery Board Report (p. xxvii.), that the *Vigilant* is not worth the money she costs to keep up, and should be superseded by a steam vessel ; also that, in view of the recent extension of the area where trawling is illegal, there should be three efficient steam gunboats, each with a steam launch, to act as a sea police all the year round ?

**THE SECRETARY FOR SCOTLAND** (Sir G. TREVELYAN, Glasgow, Bridgeton) : That the Government does exercise considerable control over the trawling on the Scottish coast is proved by the fact that since the 10th of February two trawlers have been arrested actually at work off the coast of Caithness, while proceedings have been taken against a third trawler against which a complaint was lodged. If it is found that the protection against trawling is inadequate, application will be made to the Admiralty for further assistance.

**MR. BUCHANAN** (Aberdeenshire, E.) : Is not the Scotch Office continually receiving complaints as to the insufficiency of the present arrangement, and will application be made to the Admiralty for another vessel ?

**SIR G. TREVELYAN** : The matter is always before the Scotch Office. We hope before the summer season to have an extra vessel.

**\*MR. WEIR** (Ross and Cromarty) : Will the right hon. Gentleman take steps to have the *Vigilant* removed not only from the East Coast but also from the West Coast ?

**SIR G. TREVELYAN** : If the protection on the East Coast is found to be inadequate further action shall be taken in the matter.

#### POSTAL ORDERS.

**SIR GEORGE BADEN-POWELL** (Liverpool, Kirkdale) : I beg to ask the Postmaster General whether his attention has been called to the inconvenience and expense, falling chiefly on the poorer classes, of the regulations at present in force in regard to postal orders ; and whether he can arrange that any sum not exceeding £1 can be transmitted at a uniform poundage, no extra charge being made when more than one postal order is required to make up the amount ?

**MR. A. MORLEY** : The point raised by the hon. Member is not so easy to arrange as might be supposed. There are now 14 denominations of orders which were arranged with great care, keeping two objects in view—1st, to keep the poundage low ; 2nd, to give as many denominations as could be offered at the low price. Every additional denomination increases the working expenses. The hon. Member suggests that two orders should be sold at the price of one, in certain cases, but this proposal would admit of abuse, as orders so obtained might then be used singly without any poundage having been paid upon them. An uniform poundage could not be given without increase in the charge for the two smallest denominations, which represent nearly 7,000,000 of orders per year.

#### THE CLONAKILTY AND ROSSCARBERY RAILWAY.

**MR. WILLIAM REDMOND** (Clare, E.) : I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that, in regard to the proposed Clonakilty and Rosscarbery Railway, at the Cork Assizes in 1891, the County Grand Jury passed the sum of £30,000 on the promise of the late Government that, if the Grand Jury passed £30,000, the Government would give the additional grant of £20,000 to finish and complete the line, and that the Grand Jury also passed a resolution calling on the Government to give the additional grant without delay ; and whether the present Government will endeavour to carry out the promises of the late Administration in this matter ?

**SIR J. T. HIBBERT** : I do not find that any such promise of a grant was made by the late Government, and as the

line was not scheduled under the Light Railways Act of 1889, no grant could be made.

#### SALARIES OF ANGLO-INDIAN OFFICIALS.

MR. FIELD (Dublin, St. Patrick) : I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India whether the attention of the Government has been drawn to the Deputation, *re* Exchange and the Services, which waited on Lord Lansdowne ; and whether it is intended to take any steps to relieve the condition of affairs from which Anglo-Indian officials now suffer ?

\*THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA (MR. GEORGE RUSSELL, North Beds.) : Yes, Sir. The subject is under consideration in connection with the currency question.

#### BELFAST EXCISE COLLECTION.

SIR EDWARD HARLAND (Belfast, N.) : I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury what were the several amounts in the years 1888, 1889, 1890, 1891, and 1892 derived from the Belfast collection, under the heads of Inland Revenue and Excise Duties, for the purpose of Imperial Revenue ; and which probably embraces, amongst others, Income Tax, Probate and Stamp Duties, Publicans' Licences, and a considerable portion of the Spirit Duties ?

SIR J. T. HIBBERT : The following was the amount of Inland Revenue received in the Belfast collection, exclusive of the portion applicable to the Local Taxation Account—1888, £1,629,868 ; 1889, £1,677,708 ; 1890, £1,895,354 ; 1891, £2,027,664 ; 1892, £2,104,742.

MR. SEXTON (Kerry, N.) : I wish to ask whether the amount collected in Belfast is not mainly due to Excise Duties on articles exported to Great Britain for consumption there ?

SIR J. T. HIBBERT : I fancy it is so. I will inquire and let the hon. Member know.

#### SLAVE TRADING IN MALAGASY WATERS.

SIR CHARLES DILKE (Gloucester, Forest of Dean) : I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether, by the existing Anglo-Malagasy Treaty, we have the right of searching

any Malagasy or Arab vessels suspected of being engaged in the slave trade in the waters of Madagascar, and of dealing with such vessels and their crews as though engaged in piratical undertakings ; whether there has been a distribution of French flags to Malagasy and Arab dhows on the coast of Madagascar ; whether Her Majesty's Government have lately given orders to the officers of the British Navy to in no way concern themselves with exercising a police control over dhows in the territorial waters of Madagascar ; whether an indemnity has been granted to the owners of dhows flying the French flag searched for slaves in Madagascar waters by the British gunboat *Redbreast* ; out of what fund this indemnity has been granted ; and whether there will be any opportunity of discussing the matter on the Supplementary Estimates ?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (SIR E. GREY, Northumberland, Berwick) : The answer to (1) is that we had powers of search under the Treaty, but under Art. 96 of the Brussels Act all stipulations of Conventions concluded previous to the Act which are inconsistent with it were repealed. By the Declaration of August 5, 1890, Great Britain recognised the Protectorate of France over Madagascar with its consequences. The obligations of the Brussels Act are imposed alike on Powers exercising Sovereignty or Protectorate. Great Britain, and all the other Signatory Powers, have recognised that France undertakes the obligations of a Protectorate as regards Madagascar, inasmuch as the formal engagement of the French Plenipotentiary to apply, as necessity should arise, the provisions of Arts. 30 & 41 to Madagascar was recorded, without objection, in a Protocol annexed to the Act. The Protectorate over the Island includes the territorial waters. (2.) We have no knowledge of any distribution of flags. (3.) The instructions framed and issued under the late Government to Naval officers since the ratification of the Act inform them that they have now no power to search vessels in the territorial waters of Madagascar. (4 and 5.) No indemnity was granted by Her Majesty's Government, but Admiral Kennedy spontaneously and of his own hand paid £10 to the owners of two dhows which were seized

*Sir J. T. Hibbert*

under a misapprehension by the *Redbreast* before the instructions were received.

#### IRISH NATIONAL TEACHERS.

MR. HAYDEN (Roscommon, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland when the National Teachers will be paid their capitation grant, in lieu of the school fees, as provided for under the Irish Education Act?

\*THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (MR. J. MORLEY, Newcastle-upon-Tyne): The issue of the capitation grant awaits the passing of the Supplementary Estimates, and payments will be made as soon as possible after the money becomes available.

#### THE BRUSSELS MONEY CONFERENCE.

MR. TOMLINSON (Preston): I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether any further Supplementary Estimate will be submitted to the House for the costs of the International Monetary Conference, Brussels; and, if not, out of what rate the costs have been defrayed?

\*SIR J. HIBBERT: The expenses of the British Delegates at the Monetary Conference, amounting to £328, have been charged, in accordance with precedent, to the Vote for Temporary Commissions, sub-head S, "Commissions not specifically provided for."

MR. TOMLINSON: Is that Vote included in the Supplementary Estimate?

SIR J. T. HIBBERT: Yes, Sir.

#### THE EVICTED TENANTS (IRELAND) COMMISSION.

SIR JOHN GORST (Cambridge University): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether the original Estimate for "Temporary Commissioners not specially provided for" for 1892-3 was £8,000; whether the sum now found to be necessary for the above service is £10,700; and whether the excess over the original Estimate has been partly caused by the costs of the Evicted Tenants (Ireland) Commission?

\*SIR J. T. HIBBERT: The original Estimate for "Commissions not specifically provided for" was £8,000. It is now estimated that the total sum chargeable to the sub-head will be £10,700. There will be some 27 Commissions or Com-

mittees, of greater or less importance, chargeable to the sub-head, none of which were known of when the Estimate was framed, and it is not possible in strictness to say that the excess over the original Estimate was due to one of these rather than to any other. But, in accordance with practice, the Supplementary Estimate mentioned the largest item of all these Commissions, that for the Metropolitan Water Supply, as sufficient by itself to account for the excess over the original provision.

SIR J. GORST: What is the precedent the right hon. Gentleman relies on?

\*SIR J. T. HIBBERT: I will state that in reply to another question later on.

MR. JAMES LOWTHER (Kent, Thanet): Does the right hon. Gentleman then ear-mark the excess of the Estimate to one Commission only?

\*SIR J. T. HIBBERT: We have acted on precedent. This Supplementary Estimate was prepared in the usual way by the proper branch of the Treasury. It has been the practice that the item which asks for the largest amount shall be specially named in the Supplementary Estimate.

MR. JAMES LOWTHER: Does the right hon. Gentleman contend that the expenses of the other Commissions should not come within the purview of the House of Commons?

SIR J. T. HIBBERT: No; I contend nothing. I will, I think, be for the Chairman of Committees to say whether any discussion should be raised.

MR. HANBURY: Can the right hon. Gentleman undertake that no portion of the £2,000 shall yet be paid for the Evicted Tenants Commission?

\*SIR J. T. HIBBERT: The Commission which will require the largest amount will take £3,200, and the Evicted Tenants Commission, which requires £2,170, is outside the other item.

MR. T. W. RUSSELL (Tyrone, S.): May I ask whether, seeing that when the original Vote for Temporary Commissions was passed the Metropolitan Water Supply Commission was in existence, it is possible to include in the Vote the expenses of the Evicted Tenants Commission, which was not in existence or even contemplated by the original Vote, and which is responsible for the deficit; and whether such a course of



procedure is not a grave breach of Constitutional practice, in withdrawing as it does a contentious Vote from the control of the House of Commons.

**MR. SEXTON :** I rise to a point of Order. I beg to ask whether the question put by the hon. Member opposite does not involve a question of interpretation and other questions which must be decided by the Chairman of Ways and Means?

**\*MR. SPEAKER :** It is clearly not a question for me to decide. It is a question for the Chairman of Committees, from whose decision there is no appeal.

**\*SIR J. T. HIBBERT :** I wish to state in reply to the speech of the hon. Member, that the Metropolitan Water Supply Commission is a new Commission, which has been appointed since the Estimates were passed.

#### HOME RULE AND GUARANTEED LAND STOCK.

**MR. SEYMOUR KEAY** (Elgin and Nairn) : I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether, as Clauses 14 (3) (d) and (17) of the Government of Ireland Bill repeal the provisions of "The Purchase of Land (Ireland) Act, 1891," which direct payment to the Local Taxation (Ireland) Account of a share of the Probate, Excise, and Customs Duties of the United Kingdom, and which hypothecate other grants to Ireland, such share of duties and such grants will still be paid to the Guarantee Fund, under Section 5 of that Act; and if not so paid, having regard to the provisions of Section 9 of "The Purchase of Land (Ireland) Act, 1891," what will be the approximate amount of Guaranteed Land Stock available for issue under the contemplated new arrangements?

**\*MR. J. MORLEY :** I am not sure that the statements set forth in the first paragraph are strictly correct, but it is possible one of the clauses will have to be re-drafted. At the same time, I may say there is no intention on the part of the framers of the Government of Ireland Bill to interfere or disturb the amount of Land Stock available for issue.

*Mr. T. W. Russell*

#### OFFICERS AS DIRECTORS OF PUBLIC COMPANIES.

**MR. HANBURY :** I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War what is the rule as to the tenure of Directorships of Trading Companies by officers on the Active List; and whether such officers are required to inform the War Office of the fact that they undertake these extra duties?

**\*THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR** (Mr. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN, Stirling, &c.) : By the Queen's Regulations an officer on full pay is forbidden to join the Directorate of any public industrial or other company without permission from the Commander-in-Chief. Each case as it arises is decided on its merits.

#### INVENTIONS BY GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS.

**MR. HANBURY :** I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether licences to manufacture cordite under the patent assigned to the War Office have been granted to any, and, if any, what private firms; whether this patent was assigned to the War Office as being the invention of a Government official; and whether Government officials who take out and assign patents for warlike inventions under such circumstances are permitted to make profit by the use of such patents in foreign countries?

**\*MR. CAMPBELL - BANNERMAN :** A licence to manufacture cordite has been granted to Messrs. Pigou, Wilkes, and Co. The patent in this case was assigned to the War Office as being the invention of a Government official. Government officials are not debarred from making a profit by the use of such patents in foreign countries. The object of the War Office in obtaining the assignment of a patent is to secure the power to manufacture untrammelled by the claims of the patentee. To prevent an inventor from patenting his invention abroad would not benefit the War Department, which has no desire to gain a profit. It would only result in preventing an inventor from obtaining a legitimate

**MR. HANBURY :** Do I understand that Government officials are entitled in Government time to patent inventions, and then to make money abroad ?

**\*MR. CAMPBELL - BANNERMAN :** They do not patent them in Government time, although perhaps the experience gained while serving the Government is of assistance to them. I do not see it would be of any advantage to this country to prevent them having the right to sell the invention abroad.

#### TRIAL BY JURY IN BENGAL.

**MR. SCHWANN (Manchester, N.E.):** I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India whether Mr. Justice Prinsep, a Puisne Judge of the High Court, Calcutta, has been appointed to the Presidentship of the Commission which is to inquire into the hurried withdrawal of the rights of trial by jury in eight districts of Bengal by Sir Charles Elliott and his Legislative Council ; and whether Justice Prinsep has expressed any opinion hostile to trial by jury in India ?

**\*MR. GEORGE RUSSELL :** Mr. Justice Prinsep has been appointed to act as President of the Commission to which the hon. Member refers. So far as the Secretary of State is aware, Mr. Justice Prinsep has expressed no opinion hostile to trial by jury in India.

**MR. MAC NEILL (Donegal, S.):** Is it not a fact that Justice Prinsep, who is now in this country, is advertised to read a Paper on "Trial by Jury in Bengal" before the East India Association and free discussion is invited ? Is that consistent with impartiality ?

**\*MR. GEORGE RUSSELL :** I am not aware of that fact, but until we see or hear the paper we cannot say what views Justice Prinsep holds on the matter.

#### LOUGH ERNE DRAINAGE WORKS.

**MR. M'GILLIGAN (Fermanagh, S.):** I beg to ask the Secretary to Treasury whether he can state to what extent the cost of the Lough Erne drainage works exceeded the estimate, and what explanation can be offered as to this excess, and whether he will consent to lay upon the Table of the House the particulars of the full cost, amounting to £210,000 ; whether, in view of the fact

that the excess expenditure has been imposed as a tax upon the people of the district, the Treasury will institute a sworn inquiry respecting this heavy excess ; whether he can state how many of the holdings which are liable for the payment of this tax have had judicial rents fixed, and how many are non-judicial holdings ; and whether, taking into account all the facts of the case, the Treasury can see its way to grant some relief or abatement of the heavy charge enforced ? I desire, further, to ask why no detailed account of the expenditure incurred has been published for the information of those concerned, as prescribed by the Statute ?

**\*SIR J. T. HIBBERT :** Full information with reference to the excess over the estimated expenditure has already been given in Parliamentary Paper No. 414 of 1891. With regard to the particulars of the full cost, I should explain that the Board of Works is in no way bound or required to keep or publish any detailed accounts of expenditure, but it will be seen from pages 9 and 10 of the Parliamentary Paper referred to with what elaboration the Accounts are required to be presented and examined before instalments of a loan are advanced. Under the 17th section of the Act 26 & 27 Vict., c. 88, it is the Local Drainage Board that is bound to carry out the provisions of the Commissioners Clauses Act 1847 with regard, *inter alia*, to the accounts to be kept by them. Neither the Treasury nor the Board of Works can interfere, but I am informed that, as a matter of fact, the accounts have been published by the Local Drainage Board. The Treasury do not consider that any useful end would be served by laying the detailed accounts on the Table or by a sworn inquiry, but I must point out that the excess expenditure is not correctly described as having been imposed as a tax upon the people of the district. Of the 1,448 holdings mentioned in my answer of the 26th instant, judicial rents had been fixed in the case of 703. The Treasury does not see its way to take action in the direction of giving relief as desired by the hon. Member.

#### KILLALOE SLATES.

**MR. P. J. O'BRIEN (Tipperary, N.) :** I beg to ask the Secretary of State for

War whether, having regard to the fact that the slates from the Killaloe Quarries have been approved of and largely made use of by the Board of Works for their buildings in Ireland, and with a view to the encouragement and support of Irish industries, he will take into consideration the claim of the Killaloe Slate Quarries Company to have their slates used for the contemplated improvement works at the Curragh Camp, provided that these slates are found to be of as good a quality as any others, and not higher in price?

MR. FIELD: At the same time, I will ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether it is the intention of Government to use Killaloe slates in the reconstruction of the Curragh Camp?

\*MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: So far as possible, for building work in Ireland Irish materials are used; but it is found that Welsh slates are lighter and more durable than Killaloe slates, and therefore cheaper in the end. Consequently the contracts for work at the Curragh, so far as entered into, have included Bangor slates. If, however, Killaloe slates can be supplied of equal quality with the Bangor slates, and not higher in price, there will be no objection to use them in any further contracts.

#### MR. JUSTICE MATHEW'S SALARY.

MR. HANBURY: I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether Mr. Justice Mathew will draw a salary as Judge of the High Court in England during the period of his absence from duty outside the jurisdiction of that Court; whether such absence occurred while that Court was sitting, and whether it was due to any temporary incapacity, by reason of health or other usual reason, for the particular duties in respect of which such salary is charged upon the Consolidated Fund; if not, by whom was such leave of absence granted; and on what authority can salary be drawn for the period of absence?

MR. MAC NEILL: I respectfully submit, Sir, that this question is not in Order. Have you not repeatedly ruled that there is but one method by which the House of Commons can impugn the conduct of a Judge?

\*MR. SPEAKER: The question is in Order. I can see no imputation in it.

Mr. P. J. O'Brien

\*MR. DODD: Is there not a direct, straightforward and constitutional method of challenging the conduct of Mr. Justice Mathew?

SIR W. HARCOURT: The salary of a Judge is a permanent annual salary, not dependent on or measured by the actual time of his sittings; and there is no authority for stopping the salary, so long as a Judge retains his office. There is no authority over a Judge to grant leave of absence, or otherwise; his conduct is subject only to the power of removal by the Crown on an Address of both Houses of Parliament. I may add that Judges have been frequently requested to sit on important Commissions; and have done so with advantage to the Public Service, and without question of the propriety of their doing so.

MR. HANBURY: Have the Judges sat upon the Commissions arising out of their jurisdiction?

SIR W. HARCOURT: Royal Commissions on which Judges have sat are not within their jurisdiction.

MR. BARTLEY (Islington, N.): Have the Commissions been of a Party political character?

[No answer was given.]

#### THE LONDON AND GENERAL BANK.

MR. A. MORTON (Peterborough): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he is aware that although the London and General Bank stopped payment in September last, and that there are plenty of assets, no dividend has yet been declared; and whether he will take steps to secure that no delay is caused to the settlement of the case by the proceedings of the Official Receiver?

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE (Mr. MUNDELLA, Sheffield, Brightside): No unnecessary delay has taken place in the winding-up of the London and General Bank. The statement of the Company's affairs, which is required by Statute to be furnished by the Directors and officers of the Company, was filed with the Official Receiver on 16th November last; a summary of the statement with a full Report by the Official Receiver upon the position and affairs of the Company, which were in a complicated condition, was thereafter

issued to the creditors and contributories, and the statutory meetings were held on 25th January. Notice of intended dividend was gazetted during the present month. Further dividends will depend upon the produce of calls, and upon the results of the winding-up of other Companies on which the London and General Bank has large claims.

#### TEMPORARY COMMISSIONS.

**MR. JAMES LOWTHER:** I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he will lay upon the Table of the House a list of the various Temporary Commissions which are included in the Supplementary Estimate under the heading "Commissions not specifically provided for," the original Estimate for which was £8,000, but for which an additional sum of £2,700 is included in the Supplementary Estimate?

**\*SIR J. T. HIBBERT:** The Commissions chargeable to sub-head S of the Temporary Commissions Vote, 1892-93, number 27. I hold in my hand a list of them in the order in which they appear in the Treasury Books, and in which they will be set forth in the Appropriation Account of the Vote, and I shall be prepared to show it to my right hon. Friend if he desires to see it.

**MR. JAMES LOWTHER:** May I take it the Evicted Tenants Commission is one of the 27?

**SIR J. T. HIBBERT:** Yes.

**MR. CARSON** (Dublin University): How much of the sum of £8,000 has been paid away in the expenses of the Evicted Tenants Commission?

**\*SIR J. T. HIBBERT:** The estimated cost of the Evicted Tenants Commission is £2,170.

**MR. JAMES LOWTHER:** Is it all paid?

**SIR J. T. HIBBERT:** No, Sir.

#### HYDE PARK CORNER.

**SIR THOMAS ESMONDE** (Kerry, W.): I beg to ask the First Commissioner of Works if it would be possible to lay down a riding track from Hyde Park Corner to the Marble Arch, inside the present railings; and, if so, whether he would have an estimate made of the probable cost of making it?

**MR. SHAW LEFEVRE:** It has always been the custom to lay down sand along the side of the road from

Hyde Park Corner to the Marble Arch, during the summer, for the benefit of riders. The making of an additional road, as suggested by the hon. Baronet, would involve an expenditure of £10,000, and the cutting down of many ornamental trees.

#### IRISH RURAL POSTMEN.

**SIR THOMAS ESMONDE:** I beg to ask the Postmaster General if Irish rural postmen will be allowed free medical attendance, as is allowed to other postmen?

**MR. A. MORLEY:** Rural postmen, in common with other servants of the Post Office who come within the prescribed limit of salary (£150 a year), can obtain advice and medicine on application at the surgery of the medical officer in those towns where the Department has a medical officer, but they are not entitled to attendance at their own homes if they reside more than three miles from the Post Office. Rural postmen in Ireland are treated in exactly the same way as rural postmen in England and Scotland.

#### IRISH TENANT PURCHASERS.

**MR. ARTHUR O'CONNOR** (Donegal, E.): I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will state upon what ground income duty is required from a tenant purchaser in Ireland in respect of the amount of principal monies repaid in the purchase instalments; and whether his attention has been directed in this connection to Section 40 of 16 & 17 Vict. c. 34?

**SIR W. HARCOURT:** Such portions of the purchase instalments as represent principal monies are, in fact, repayments of borrowed capital. There is no authority in the Act referred to by the hon. Member, or in any other Act relating to Income Tax, for the allowance—by deduction or otherwise—of the duty on repayments of borrowed capital.

#### THE EVICTED TENANTS (IRELAND) COMMISSION.

**MR. BARTLEY:** I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer in what manner, if at all, the expenses of the Commission on Irish Evicted Tenants will be brought forward for the consideration of the House?

\*SIR J. T. HIBBERT : There is no Constitutional necessity for obtaining the special sanction of Parliament to expenditure upon a particular Commission chargeable to the Vote for Temporary Commissions, Sub-head S, "Commissions not specifically provided for." All such expenditure is duly set out in the Appropriation Account under the heads of the several Commissions or Committees. As a typical instance, it may be mentioned that in 1888-89 the expenses of the Special Commission, 1888, to the amount of £1,958, were treated in this manner; and as no Supplementary Estimate was then required on the Vote as a whole, Parliament had no opportunity of discussing this very important and controversial Commission on the Estimates for the year in which it originated.

MR. BARTLEY : Then I will ask whether the expenditure under the Parnell Commission was not incurred under a special Act of Parliament; and whether I am to understand that Her Majesty's Government do not intend to allow Parliament to have any voice in the consideration of the expenses of this Special Commission?

\*SIR J. T. HIBBERT : In reply to the first question, I may say that, though the appointment of the Parnell Commission was authorised by Act of Parliament, yet the expenses were equally obliged to be voted in this House. I do not know that the Government has considered the question, or can give any opinion upon it. It will be for the Chairman of Committees, when the Supplementary Votes come before the House, to decide whether any discussion can be taken on the matter or not.

SIR J. GORST : I will ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether, when the Vote is brought on, the Government will take any objection to the cost of the Commission being discussed?

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (MR. W. E. GLADSTONE, Edinburgh, Midlothian) : The right hon. Gentleman has not given me any notice of that question, and I have not had it under my consideration in any way. I must ask him for time.

SIR J. GORST : I will put a question down for to-morrow.

MR. W. E. GLADSTONE (later on) said : So far as the Government are concerned, they will take no objection to the discussion of the cost of the Commission on the Estimates.

#### THE SCOTCH BOARD OF SUPERVISION.

MR. WEIR (Ross and Cromarty) : I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland whether, having regard to the prevalence of small-pox in Scotland and the possible visitation of cholera, it is the intention of Her Majesty's Government to arrange for the management of the sanitary affairs of Scotland by a responsible Representative Body composed of persons possessing technical knowledge?

SIR G. TREVELYAN : The question of the re-organisation of the Board of Supervision, which is the Health Office of Scotland, is seriously occupying the attention of Government.

MR. WEIR : Is not the Board composed of persons without technical knowledge?

SIR G. TREVELYAN : The constitution of the Board is well known. I repeat, it is occupying the attention of the Scotch Office.

#### RAILWAY RATES IN IRELAND.

MR. FIELD : I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he is aware that the basis of all railway rates (more especially those on live stock) in Ireland is much higher than the recognised standard of calculation in Great Britain; whether it is intended that in the promised revision the Irish Railway Companies will level down their charges so as to equalise them with English and Scotch rates; and whether the Board of Trade will take measures to remedy the disparity between mileage tariffs on imports and on native products?

MR. MUNDELLA : If by the basis of all railway rates the hon. Member means the statutory powers granted to the companies I do not think that, so far as regards merchandise, those are higher than the powers granted, for example, to the Great Western Branch lines, and to the lines south of the Thames. As regards live stock the powers are higher, but the clauses conferring those powers were agreed to by the Irish traders when the Bill was before Parliament. I have no power to insist that Irish rates shall be precisely equal to English or Scotch

rates : the difference in the size of the Irish trucks is, for instance, a matter which introduces variety of charge. As regards the last portion of the hon. Member's question, I can only refer him to the provisions of Section 27 of the Railway and Canal Traffic Act, 1888, in which it is provided that—

"No Railway Company shall make, nor shall the Court, or the Commissioners, sanction, any difference in the tolls, rates, or charges made for, or any difference in the treatment of, home and foreign merchandise, in respect of the same or similar services."

**MR. FIELD :** Is the right hon. Gentleman not aware that the Cattle Traders' Association only agreed to these terms because they were obliged to. Is there any Court of Appeal to which they can go ?

**MR. MUNDELLA :** I am not aware of that. They went, I believe, before the Joint Committee and agreed to the arrangement.

**MR. FIELD :** Because they could not help themselves.

#### ORDER OF BUSINESS.

**MR. EVERETT** (Suffolk, Woodbridge) had the following question on the Paper :—

"To ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether, in order to enable Members, and especially inexperienced Members, more easily to follow the business of the House each day, he will take steps to have the statement of that business with which Members are furnished day by day placed upon the Paper in the order in which that business will be taken ?"

The hon. Member said, I have received a letter from the Prime Minister, in which it is pointed out that the subject of the question is rather a matter for the decision of the Clerk at the Table. May I humbly submit to Sir Reginald Palgrave that it would be greatly for the convenience of the new Members if the business were shown in its proper order at the top of the "Orders of the Day."

**MR. W. E. GLADSTONE :** I may say I took the opportunity of representing to my hon. Friend that I was quite certain that if, without occupying the time of the House by any question or discussion as to the arrangement of the Paper, he would communicate with the authorities, every attention would be paid to any representation he might make. I took that course, inasmuch as, if I had

answered the question, it might have looked like a disposition on the part of the Government to take into their own hands matters that really belong to the authorities of the House.

#### THE PARISH AND DISTRICT COUNCILS BILL.

**MR. FRANCIS STEVENSON** (Suffolk, Eye) : I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury when the Parish and District Councils Bill will be introduced ?

**MR. W. E. GLADSTONE :** Although I am not prepared now to name a day, I may say I shall certainly seek an opportunity of introducing this Bill before Easter.

#### IRISH OFFICIALS AND HOME RULE.

**MR. MACARTNEY** (Antrim, S.) : I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether Irish officials appointed under an Act of Parliament which states that their appointment was until they die or resign, or are removed for misconduct or incapacity, but whose salaries are not charged on the Consolidated Fund, are liable under Section 28, Sub-section 2a, of "The Government of Ireland Bill" to be retired from office if so required by the Irish Government ?

**MR. W. E. GLADSTONE :** I am not aware of any such cases as those to which the hon. Gentleman refers ; but if the hon. Gentleman can point out any cases in which officials have a statutory right, I have no doubt that every care will be taken to prevent their rights or claims receiving any detriment by the Government of Ireland Bill.

#### OIL FOR HER MAJESTY'S NAVY.

**COLONEL HOWARD VINCENT** (Sheffield, Central) : I beg to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty if he can explain why several hundred tons of costly foreign oils are annually used on Her Majesty's ships for the general lubrication of machinery in preference to British made compound oil used for like purposes by the great steamship lines of the United Kingdom, who thereby not only give employment to Home industry, but also effect an economy of some 40 per cent. in expenditure ?

**\*THE SECRETARY TO THE ADMIRALTY** (Sir U. KAY-SHUTTLEWORTH, Lancashire, Clitheroe) : The only

oils considered suitable for lubricating the machinery of Her Majesty's ships are mineral oils, distilled from American petroleum, and olive oil, neither of which are British products. Compound oils are largely used in practice; but the compounding is done after the pure oils are purchased, and thus an economy is secured. The contract for the supply of mineral oil for the Navy for 1893-94 has been placed with the Dee Oil Company, a British firm. Olive oil is imported direct.

#### VOLUNTEER ESTABLISHMENT.

**COLONEL HOWARD VINCENT :** I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War if any check is placed upon Volunteer Corps in recruiting up to their authorised establishment, and if within such number the equipment and greatcoat allowance is invariably granted?

**\*MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN :** Every Volunteer Corps can recruit up to its establishment, and the annual equipment allowance of 1s. and greatcoat allowance of 2s. is made for all efficient for the year within that establishment, except in cases where Corps have received a special payment for the supply of greatcoats. In such instances the greatcoat allowance is temporarily suspended for varying periods.

#### RIVER POACHING IN IRELAND.

**CAPTAIN M'CALMONT (Antrim, E.):** I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether a man named Bryan Dogherty was convicted at the Ballyshannon Petty Sessions in July last of poaching in the Bundrowes River, and in consequence of being an old offender was fined £9 and costs in each of two cases against him, this conviction being subsequently upheld on appeal to the Quarter Sessions held at Donegal in October last; whether Dogherty, having subsequently petitioned the Lord Lieutenant, got the fines reduced to £5; was this Petition submitted to the local resident Magistrate for his opinion or sanction previous to the reduction being made; and have the warrants for the reduced fines been executed?

**\*MR. J. MORLEY :** Dogherty was convicted at Ballyshannon Petty Sessions in June and July of last year, and the facts are substantially stated by the hon. and gallant Member. The penalties were

reduced on the recommendation of the Magistrates in Petty Sessions, whose opinion was obtained in the usual course, and the warrants have been executed and the reduced fines paid.

#### EMPLOYERS' LIABILITY ABROAD.

**MR. LAWRENCE (Liverpool, Abercromby) :** I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he can lay upon the Table of the House any Memorandum showing the state of the law in other countries as to employers' liability in relation to shipping interests; and, if not, whether he will acquire this information for the above purpose, so far as concerns the United States, France, Germany, Sweden, and Norway?

**THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. ASQUITH, Fife, E.):** I regret to say I am unable at the present moment to furnish the hon. Member with the information he asks for, but I am endeavouring to obtain it as soon as possible. I am in communication with the Foreign Office on the subject.

#### SUBVENTIONED CRUISERS.

**MR. W. G. C. BENTINCK (Penryn and Falmouth) :** I beg to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty whether the attention of the First Lord of the Admiralty has been called to recent celebrations in New York, at which the President of the United States was present, on the occasion of the change of flag of the steamship *City of New York*, which for some years was subsidised for use as a cruiser by Her Majesty's Government; and whether the Admiralty will take steps to prevent in future any liner built in the United Kingdom, which has once received a subsidy from the Admiralty for use as a cruiser, from changing her flag to that of any other nation?

**\*SIR U. KAY-SHUTTLEWORTH :** The Board of Admiralty are aware of the circumstances attending the transfer to the American flag of two Inman steamships, the *City of Paris* and the *City of New York*, which received naval subventions for two years from the late Government, amounting to close on £27,000. The third year's subvention was forfeited. Under the existing contracts one year's subvention would be

*Sir U. Kay-Shuttleworth*

thus forfeited in any similar case; but there is nothing to prevent the sale or transfer to a foreign Government or flag of any of the mercantile cruisers. Her Majesty's Government have the power to purchase any subventioned cruiser during the period of the contract. The steps which the Admiralty propose to take on this subject for the future will be better explained on the Navy Estimates than in answer to a question.

**MR. GOURLEY (Sunderland):** Were there any guns or fittings on these vessels?

**\*SIR U. KAY-SHUTTLEWORTH:** No guns or armament fittings; but some other fittings, which cannot be removed.

#### IRISH ELECTORAL STATISTICS.

**SIR M. HICKS-BEACH (Bristol, W.):** I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he will cause a Return to be prepared showing the rateable value of, and the number of, electors in each of the constituencies in the first Schedule of the Bill for the amendment of the government of Ireland; and whether he will arrange, if possible, that it shall be in the hands of hon. Members before the Second Reading of the Bill is entered upon?

**\*MR. J. MORLEY:** I have already promised to lay on the Table before the Second Reading of the Bill a Return giving most of the particulars the right hon. Baronet desires. I do not think there will be any difficulty in adding the others he has mentioned. I will certainly do my best.

#### SWAZILAND.

**BARON H. DE WORMS (Liverpool, East Toxteth):** I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies whether the report from Cape Town was correct, which appeared that morning in the papers, to the effect that—

"The message of the Imperial Government, communicated to the Queen Regent of Swaziland on the 20th instant by Colonel Martin, the British Commissioner, announces to the Swazis that the projected meeting between Sir Henry Loch and President Kruger will probably decide the future of Swaziland."

**THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES (Mr. S. BUXTON, Tower Hamlets, Poplar):**

It is not a fact that the Imperial Government have communicated any message to the Queen Regent of Swaziland. As I informed the right hon. Gentleman on Thursday, Colonel Martin was to have an interview with the Queen Regent on his return from leave. Sir H. Loch took the opportunity of informing the Queen Regent, through Colonel Martin, of the intended meeting between himself and the President of the South African Republic, of which the right hon. Gentleman is aware. The communication in question was a personal one from Sir H. Loch to the Queen Regent, and was not in pursuance of any instructions from Her Majesty's Government.

#### IRISH BANK STOCK.

**MR. JOHNSTON (Belfast, S.):** I beg to ask the Chief Secretary if he will grant the following as an Unopposed Return:—Stocks and Shares, &c. (Ireland),—Returns showing the price of Stock of the Bank of Ireland, Northern Bank, Ulster Bank, and other leading Banks in Ireland, on the 1st day of February and on the 1st day of March respectively; the price of the Shares of the principal Irish Railways, and other securities, at the same dates; and, the number and names of the Purchasers of the various Stocks between the dates specified, showing those who are supporters of the Government of Ireland Bill?

**\*MR. J. MORLEY:** No, Sir; I cannot consent to grant that Return.

**MR. JOHNSTON:** Will the right hon. Gentleman give the information in reply to a question?

**\*MR. J. MORLEY:** I must see the question before I express any opinion.

#### GUIANA AND VENEZUELA.

**SIR RICHARD TEMPLE (Surrey, Kingston):** I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether Her Majesty's Government have information regarding recent maltreatment of British subjects in the disputed territory of Guiana; and, if so, whether any action has been taken; and whether any negotiations have taken place with a view to a settlement of the boundary and tariff questions now in dispute between the West India Colonies and Venezuela?



SIR E. GREY : Representations have been received by Her Majesty's Government as to the ill-treatment of one British subject and the murder of another at El Callao, and the acting British Consul at Caracas has placed correspondence on the subject in the hands of the German Representative who is in charge of British interests in Venezuela, and who will be requested to apply for investigation of the facts, punishment of the guilty persons, and compensation to the sufferers. No recent cases of ill-treatment of British subjects on the British side of the line have been reported. With regard to the latter part of the question, no negotiations have taken place recently. The Venezuela Government are aware of the terms on which we are willing to renew diplomatic relations, and also of our readiness to resume the discussion of those conditions with any properly accredited Representative whom the Venezuelan Government may send to this country for the purpose.

#### THE DEVELOPMENT OF AUSTRALIA.

SIR RICHARD TEMPLE : I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies whether any decision has been come to regarding the proposed importation and settlement of Indian natives in tropical or sub-tropical Australia, with a view to the development of its agricultural and mineral resources ?

MR. S. BUXTON : The question of the importation of Indian natives into the Australian Colonies is one for the Colonial Governments to deal with. As far as the Secretary of State is aware no definite conclusion has been come to on the subject, but South Australia has passed two Acts to enable such importation into its Northern territory, and a brief reference to the subject will be found in Parliamentary Paper, C. 6490.

#### THE COURSE OF BUSINESS.

\*MR. JAMES LOWTHER : May I ask when a day will be definitely fixed for the introduction of the Supplementary Estimates, and whether they will be taken in the order in which they appear ?

MR. W. E. GLADSTONE : The Estimates will be proceeded with this evening, if time permits.

VISCOUNT WOLMER (Edinburgh, W.) : I wish to ask when the Army Estimates will be taken ?

MR. JOHNSTON : I rise to a point of order, Sir. I beg to draw your attention to the fact that when the noble Lord rose there were cries of "Pigott" from the Benches behind me (the National Benches.)

\*MR. SPEAKER : I hope that no unparliamentary expression of that sort will be used. It did not reach my ears. If such expressions are used and reach me I will take notice of them.

MR. JOHNSTON : If the cries are repeated I will call your attention to the fact, Sir.

MR. W. E. GLADSTONE : The Army and Navy Estimates have not yet been circulated ; but the Navy Estimates are ready for circulation, and the Army Estimates are in a forward state. Probably to-morrow I shall be in a position to state that either the Army or Navy Estimates will be the first Order on Monday next.

MR. GOURLEY : Will the Navy Estimates be accompanied by the usual explanatory Memorandum ?

\*SIR U. KAY-SHUTTLEWORTH : I laid the Navy Estimates on the Table last week. Copies are in the Vote Office this afternoon. When circulated, the Estimates will be accompanied by the usual statement.

LORD G. HAMILTON (Middlesex, Ealing) : When will the statement be in our hands ?

SIR U. KAY-SHUTTLEWORTH : The statement will be in the hands of Members to-morrow morning.

MR. HANBURY : When may we look for the Army Estimates ?

MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN : I hope they will be circulated on Wednesday morning.

MR. T. W. RUSSELL : Will the correspondence between the Chief Secretary for Ireland and the National Education Board be circulated before Wednesday ?

SIR J. T. HIBBERT : I have done my best to get it circulated. It is in the hands of the printers.

#### NEW WRIT.

For Great Grimsby, v. Henri Josse, esquire, Manor of Northstead.—(Mr. Marjoribanks.)

## NEW MEMBERS SWORN.

James Francis Hogan, esquire, for County of Tipperary (Mid Tipperary Division); Harry Lawson Webster Lawson, esquire, for County of Gloucester (East or Cirencester Division); John Heywood Johnstone, esquire, for County of Sussex (North Western or Horsham Division): George Whiteley, esquire, for Borough of Stockport.

## M O T I O N S.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE.  
(MORNING SITTINGS.)

## RESOLUTION.

MR. W. E. GLADSTONE: I rise to move—

"That, on and after Friday next, until Easter the House do meet on Tuesday and Friday at Two o'clock, and that the provisions of Standing Order 56 be extended to the Morning Sittings on those days: Provided always, that if the Government of Ireland Bill be appointed for any of such days the House do meet at Three o'clock, and the proceedings on that Bill do have precedence of the Orders of the Day and Notices of Motion."

There is a notice of Amendment by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for the Sleaford Division of Lincolnshire (Mr. Chaplin), with respect to which we have determined to take a course which may do away with the necessity for discussion on my Motion. I know not what the opinion of other Members may be; but I confess it to have been long my opinion that no portion of the time of the House is more unsatisfactorily consumed than that portion which is spent, occasionally to the extent of an hour or two, in debating what we shall debate. On the principle of the economy of time it would be well to be free from all such discussions. When the question was first put to me, whether we could consent to postpone beyond to-morrow our Motion with respect to taking the time of the House on Tuesdays and Fridays, my answer was that it would be possible for us to make exception. Our duty is to consider what is the best bestowal of the time of the House that we can devise. Looking at the facts, and having received a good deal of information and light since last Friday as to the desire of hon. Members to speak on the question of bimetallism, I perceive

that it would not be fair to confine those hon. Members to a 9 o'clock Sitting. I do not mean that the hon. Members who desire to speak form a very large section of the House; but their number is considerable with reference to the hours available for the Debate, and therefore I do not think it wise to commence the operation of the change for which we ask until after to-morrow. I am glad to be in a position to do what may be convenient for the right hon. Member for the Sleaford Division, but, at the same time, I do not wish to take any credit for acceding to his wish and adopting the words of his Amendment. He will readily understand my position when I say that I find the number of hon. Members who are fairly entitled to ask for an opportunity of laying their views on this question of bimetallism before the House to be such that we should not be justified in resisting the right hon. Gentleman's demand. Therefore, I propose to adopt the terms of his Amendment, and to make the change come into operation until Easter, "on and after Friday next." I propose, also, to exempt from the operation of the change any afternoon for which the Second Reading of the Irish Government Bill may be set down, because it would not be satisfactory to the House that the Debate on the Second Reading of that Bill should be prosecuted at Morning Sittings on Tuesdays and Fridays. I feel it to be absolutely my duty to ask the House to give precedence to the Motion for the Second Reading of the Bill on any day on which it may be put down. I think it will be felt that the custom of the House has been, in the case of Bills of great importance, to grant such precedence; but in the case of a measure of such great, such overwhelming importance I might almost say, as this, I think it is quite clear—and I believe it will be agreeable to the general sense of the House—that precedence should be given. I am afraid I cannot make any concession with regard to the Amendment of which notice has been given, which precedes that of the right hon. Member for Sleaford, as it strikes at the root of the demand which I am about to make. I ought to say that there is a good deal of Government Business to be got through before Easter, which it is necessary for the advantage and well-being of the country, and, perhaps, in

some degree, for the honour of the House as an Assembly of men of business, that we should despatch. For this reason we feel it absolutely incumbent upon us to make the request we now submit. The House is pretty well aware of the measures with regard to which we have stages to take; but, of course, among them a very prominent place is occupied by the numerous Supplementary Estimates that are already in the hands of Members, and by the Army and Navy Estimates, on which the initial Debates must be taken. There is, we think, ample justification for the course we are taking, and which it will probably be necessary to repeat in connection with the Second Reading and following stages of the Government of Ireland Bill.

Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That, on and after Friday next, until Easter the House do meet on Tuesday and Friday at Two o'clock, and that the provisions of Standing Order 56 be extended to the Morning Sittings on those days: Provided always, that if the Government of Ireland Bill be appointed for any of such days the House do meet at Three o'clock, and the proceedings on that Bill do have precedence of the Orders of the Day and Notices of Motion."—(*Mr. W. E. Gladstone.*)

MR. SETON-KARR (St. Helen's) rose to move as an Amendment to leave out from the word "That" to the end of the Question, and add—

"it is both unnecessary and inexpedient that at this early period of the Session the Government should take any portion of the time of Private Members for Government Business."

He said he intended to record his vote against the Motion of the First Lord of the Treasury. The right hon. Gentleman had taken the wind out of the sails of the bimetallists, but that had not affected the principle on which his (Mr. Seton-Karr's) opposition was based; and in regard to the infringement of the rights of private Members, it amounted to the same thing whether the Amendment of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for the Sleaford Division (Mr. Chaplin) was accepted or not. The Government had practically monopolised the whole of the time of the House—with the exception of four Sittings—from the commencement of the Session. They now proposed under the terms of the Motion after Friday next to take the whole time of the House up to Easter with the exception of one Evening

Sitting. He was at a loss to understand for what reason or on what principle the right hon. Gentleman proposed to inflict what he could only describe as a wanton and unnecessary outrage on the rights of private Members. He would recall the circumstances of the case. The time appeared to have arrived when the rights of private Members required to be asserted in the House. During a portion of the time of the last Parliament the rights of private Members were allowed to fall into abeyance. Perhaps it was because the late Government had such a large majority. But if that were so, and if for that reason the two Front Benches entered into a coalition to deprive private Members of their rights, all he could say was that that condition of things did not exist now. Her Majesty's Government had not got so large a majority as at one time they anticipated; and whether that was the direct reason or not, he ventured to think that now, being the commencement of a new Parliament, was the time for private Members to combine together to lay down some principle for the regulation of the time of the House under which their rights would be respected. The Session was barely four weeks old, and they were being rushed headlong through the Business of the House. The Debate on the Address had occupied 10 days, six of which occurred in one week to suit the convenience of right hon. Gentlemen opposite. In 1887, 1888, 1889, and 1890, during the time of the late Government, the average length of the Debate on the Address was 12 nights, and on two of those occasions the Debate was only terminated by means of the Closure—of course he did not take account of the Autumn Session of 1890 or the two Sessions of 1892, when the energies of the Opposition, instead of being concentrated in the House, were spread throughout the country. Right hon. Gentlemen opposite no doubt thought that 10 nights was a reasonable amount of time to spend on the Address; but in 1887 they did not think so, for in that year the Debate occupied 16 nights, and was only terminated by the application of the Closure. He referred to this particularly, because the circumstances of that day were in many respects similar to those of the present time. The Government of the day were about to introduce a Bill of the first importance,

which was strongly opposed by the Opposition led by the right hon. Gentleman the present Prime Minister. The present Government were introducing a measure of the first magnitude, which was bitterly opposed by hon. gentlemen sitting on that (the Opposition) side of the House. It was war to the knife between them. And yet if they turned back to the records of this parallel Session, they would find that the Debate on the Address occupied 16 nights. He should like to call the attention of the House to the circumstances under which that Debate was concluded. This was what was reported in *Hansard* in regard to February 17th, 1887—the 16th night of the Debate—

“MR. CONYBEARE (Cornwall, Camborne) rose, when—

MR. SPEAKER: It is my opinion that this subject has been adequately discussed—that it is the evident sense of the House that this subject has been fully and fairly debated. It is my duty accordingly to inform the House of that opinion.”

Upon that the Leader of the House rose to move the Closure, and it was only after he had done that twice, and the House had divided four times, that the Debate terminated. Now, if anything of that kind had happened during the present Parliament, he would have been able to understand that there was some justification for it. But nothing of the sort had occurred. The House had agreed without a murmur to everything the Prime Minister had proposed. Not only had they sat for six nights in the second week of the Session, but they had allowed the whole of the following week, except Wednesday, to be devoted to the introduction of the Home Rule Bill, and then, instead of dividing on the First Reading, they had allowed it to pass without a Division. It seemed to him they had given up everything they could give up to the right hon. Gentleman, and now, having made these demands on their patience, the climax was reached when private Members were asked after Friday next to give up practically the whole of their days to the Government. He ventured to think that the Government were displaying a despotic, tyrannical temper in dealing with the rights of private Members. Only the other night the President of the Board of Trade made a most brutal attempt—

[cries of “Oh!”]—he only used the word in a Parliamentary sense—to pass the Railway Hours Bill. It was a quarter to 12 o'clock when the right hon. Gentleman rose to move the Second Reading of the Bill, and he absolutely went so far as to move the Closure before 12 o'clock, for which he received from Mr. Speaker a well-merited rebuke.

\*MR. SPEAKER: Order, order!

MR. SETON-KARR said that if he had transgressed the Rules of Order he apologised.

MR. J. E. ELLIS: Mr. Speaker, I ask you if you did not say that the right hon. Gentleman the President of the Board of Trade was justified in the course he took?

\*MR. SPEAKER: Order, order! The hon. Member is not entitled to make reference to my action.

MR. SETON-KARR regretted that in his ignorance he had transgressed the Rules of the House, but his point was not affected by this incident. His point was that an attempt had been made by the President of the Board of Trade to pass the Railway Hours Bill without discussion.

SIR W. HARCOURT: With the consent of right hon. Gentlemen opposite.

MR. SETON-KARR said the President of the Board of Trade had moved the Closure, but Mr. Speaker had declined to put the Question. The tyrannical procedure of the Government seemed to him to arise from their having put down the Home Rule Bill for such a very early day, leaving only a short time for the discussion of several most important questions. This Bill was being made an engine of tyranny to trample on the rights of private Members. They had heard of the despotism of the ancient Assyrian King, but Nebuchadnezzar and his image of gold were quite thrown into the shade by right hon. Gentlemen opposite. Did they expect hon. Members to bow down and worship the Home Rule Bill? What was the meaning of this conduct on the part of the Government? Everybody knew that they had to deal with an innocent and guileless Opposition, but they were trying to take an unfair advantage of that Opposition. Innocence and guilelessness might be very admirable qualities, but they might be carried too far, and the Opposition would be carrying them too

far if they submitted to this restriction of the rights of private Members. It had always been the rule that private Members' rights should not be interfered with except for urgent reasons such as arrear of Public Business or lateness of the Session, but neither of those reasons could be urged at the present moment. Members were sent to the House for other reasons besides giving support to Parties. In many cases they were pledged to the people who sent them to Parliament to bring forward social and other questions of great importance for discussion. Matters of that kind might be of small importance to a powerful Government, but they were of importance to individual constituencies. There was a case in point—bimetallism—in regard to which the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the House had given way. He had made a concession to the principle he (Mr. Seton-Karr) was advocating. Other questions might arise between now and the Second Reading of the Home Rule Bill. No doubt the right hon. Gentleman had disarmed one set of opponents by the concession he had made, but why were other Members who were interested in subjects which their constituents had charged them to bring forward to be left out in the cold? It seemed to him very much as though the Government had been making a Concession to the Front Opposition Bench. He stood there as a private Member, and he asked other private Members on both sides of the House to support his opposition to the Motion. He asked them to do so in their own interest. A point made against private Members was, that they were sometimes counted out, but that, he submitted, had absolutely nothing to do with the question. The time of private Members was their own, and they were entitled to make what use of it they chose. They all knew it was the luck of the Ballot which gave precedence to particular Motions. It might be an important or burning question which obtained a place, or one which interested very few Members; but whether the House counted itself out or not was a question for private Members alone to decide or to concern themselves about. Many people, indeed, thought that the House of Commons was better occupied in counting itself out than in doing any-

thing else. He had been referring to some authorities on this question, and one of the most interesting he found to be the hon. Member for Northampton (Mr. Labouchere). The hon. Gentleman was always a jealous guardian of rights of private Members. When a Motion of this kind was brought forward by the late Government the House was not large enough to contain the hon. Member's indignation, and the English language hardly had words strong enough to enable him to give expression to his feelings. On April 18th, 1888, a Motion was brought forward by the late-lamented Leader of the House, to give precedence over Notices of Motion to the Local Government Bill, which was then at the Second Reading stage. The hon. Member for Northampton rose in his place and opposed the Motion, and amongst other things he said—

"The ordinary usage was, that private Members' days were only taken for the Second Reading of opposed Bills which involved the fate of the Government, and that was not the case at present."

This was an argument brought forward by the hon. Member against infringement of the rights of the hon. Members, The Employers' Liability Bill, which was down for discussion on Second Reading, and would be taken probably at a Morning Sitting, was a Bill as to the principle of which everybody was agreed. It could not be said, therefore, that the fate of the Government was involved in that. The Welsh Suspensory Bill might be put down for Second Reading, but that measure was only a theoretical proposition. It was an open secret that the introduction of that Bill had served a very useful purpose, and that it would not be proceeded with; at any rate, it could not be called a Bill involving the fate of the Government. He submitted, therefore, on the principle laid down by the hon. Member for Northampton, that the Motion was absolutely unnecessary at the present time. There were other authorities on the point. The right hon. Gentleman the present Leader of the House had himself given some very authoritative statements on the subject of the invasion of private Members' rights. On the night to which he had already alluded—namely, April 13th, in the Session of 1888, the right hon. Gentleman, dealing with the Motion before the House, said—

*Mr. Seton-Karr*

"The right hon. Gentleman"—that was the then Leader of the House, Mr. W. H. Smith—"appeared to assume that there was no way of interfering with the rights of private Members, except the appropriation of entire Sittings. There was another mode of abridging very greatly the time that private Members had at their disposal—namely, by means of Morning Sittings."

He (Mr. Seton-Karr) quoted these words of the right hon. Gentleman to show that, according to his own statement, the present Motion was one which would abridge the rights of private Members. And it must not be forgotten that the Motion of Mr. W. H. Smith was brought forward on the 13th April. The House could calculate for itself how much later that was than the period at which they had now arrived. The precedent of the discussion of the Rules of Procedure in 1887 might be referred to, and he would say at once that he admitted that the Rules were made a special case. The time of private Members was taken for two or three days early in the Session in order to facilitate the passing of the Rules, but it was admitted on all hands—even by the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. W. E. Gladstone) himself—that there was good and sufficient reason for it. What happened on that occasion did not interfere with the present argument. The right hon. Gentleman had gone on to say—

"However, he did not wish to discuss that matter further than to say that he thought that the arrangement of the Business of the House with regard to its division between the Government and private Members was a matter which had reached a point—after the experience of last year and the initial experience of this—which made it very necessary that it should in a very short time be made the subject of general consideration."

From that day to this the right hon. Gentleman had done nothing to bring about the "general consideration" of which he had spoken. He had admitted that the subject was one which required consideration, and on the 13th April, 1888, he had gone so far as to say that the Government of the day, in taking the course they were proposing, were invading the rights of private Members. If that was the case then, how much more was it the case now—six weeks earlier in the year? He (Mr. Seton-Karr) had endeavoured to explain some of the grounds on which he was opposed to the Motion. The right hon. Gentleman told

the House that he would give them Evening Sittings. Well, he (Mr. Seton-Karr) ventured respectfully to assert that Evening Sittings were a delusion and a sham. The right hon. Gentleman had given them a guarantee the other night that he would make a House on Tuesday evenings, and both make and keep a House on Friday evenings; but though he (Mr. Seton-Karr) did not impugn the sincerity of the Government, he would not invest a farthing on the strength of the guarantee. There had always been an implied contract that the Government should make a House at a 9 o'clock Sitting. They now entered into an express contract that they would make a House on Tuesdays, and make and keep one on Fridays. But what redress would private Members have if they did not carry out this guarantee? The Government might summon their colleagues to attend at 9 o'clock; but the question was whether they would remain in the House. It was quite possible that a House would be made by the Government at 9 o'clock, and cheerfully counted out at a quarter past 9. He submitted that a private Member, who was thrust into an Evening Sitting on the chance of being counted out soon after 9 o'clock, was not being treated fairly and properly. It was the duty of the Government to show that they had the most urgent reasons before they compelled private Members to submit to such treatment. He appealed to private Members on both sides of the House to support his opposition to the Motion. The other day, when the Prime Minister asked for two private nights in the third week of the Session, some of the Dockyard Representatives on the opposition side of the House made a forcible protest, and asked for better opportunities for bringing forward their questions. He confessed he was surprised at the innocence of those hon. Members, who ought to have known better. Did they think that private Members, by making appeals to Cabinet Ministers, could get any satisfaction? If private Members wanted to retain their rights, they must fight for their own hand. It took a very short experience of the House of Commons to teach Members that Cabinet Ministers and ex-Cabinet Ministers—for they were both tarred with the same brush—were,

politically speaking, absolutely without conscience, scruple, or remorse. Some time ago, on three occasions, he had an opportunity of bringing forward a subject on which he was interested. Thrice he was counted out, and on the third occasion he was requested by a Cabinet Minister to withdraw his proposal. He was told that he would get a better opportunity later on, and that it would be much better for his subject if he dropped it for a short time. He most innocently and ignorantly deferred to this suggestion, but had never had another opportunity of bringing it forward. He mentioned this experience for the benefit of other private Members. He remembered that on the occasion of the Evening Sitting at which he might have brought forward his Motion had he not withdrawn it, when the House met the Government Bench was conspicuous by its emptiness; but a House was made by Radical Members who had got wind of the situation. These Members had spent a considerable sum of money in 6d. and other telegrams in getting a large body of supporters together, and in five minutes they passed more pernicious and dangerous legislation than they had been able to do for five years previously, or would be able to do during any succeeding five years. This incident showed the evil of having these Evening Sittings. He appealed for the support of Members opposite as well as of Members on his own side of the House. The hon. Member for Northampton (Mr. Labouchere) had always opposed the two Front Benches on these questions, and he asked him to do the same now. The hon. Member used, when he was in opposition, to taunt the Conservatives with being a flock of sheep who were only fit to bleat and have their throats cut. He asked the hon. Member, and those Members who were sitting behind him, if they wished to call their political souls their own, to oppose the Government on this occasion. He had placed an Amendment on the Paper, but had been informed on the high authority of the Speaker that it was practically out of Order. He should like to ask if he might move the Amendment with the addition of the words "prior to the Second Reading of the Government of Ireland Bill." If he were in Order he would move his Amendment as it stood.

*Mr. Seton-Karr*

\***MR. SPEAKER** : The Amendment as it stands is out of Order, for reasons I have communicated to the hon. Gentleman. The Government propose to take the time of hon. Members at this early period of the Session, and the hon. Gentleman says in his proposed Amendment it is inexpedient to take the time of hon. Members at this early period of the Session. That is only a mere expanded negative in another form, and the hon. Gentleman knows that a mere negative cannot be moved as an Amendment. The hon. Gentleman may, however, move to reject the Motion in its final shape.

**MR. SETON-KARR** : I bow to your ruling, Sir, and make a final appeal to private Members to prevent the right hon. Gentleman destroying their rights and making nonsense of the Rules of the House.

**MR. LABOUCHERE** (Northampton) said, he had always been a strenuous supporter of the rights of private Members. The hon. Member who had just sat down had expressed a hope that he would remain the same now as he was in the last Parliament. Principle sat enthroned always on the Radical side below the Gangway; but it must be remembered that when he opposed the Motions of the late Mr. Smith, it was because that gentleman was always desirous of taking entire days from private Members. He (Mr. Labouchere) had always supported proposals for taking Morning Sittings, because he thought that they in no sort of way interfered with the rights of private Members. Under the present Rules private Members had 24½ hours a week, including the hour taken four times a week in asking questions, while the Government had only 15 hours. This was obviously entirely wrong. The Government ought certainly to have more time than private Members, and it could not be said that if they left a fair amount of time to private Members each week they ultimately invaded the time of private Members. He himself should be glad if the Prime Minister proposed as a Standing Order that throughout the whole Session Morning Sittings should take place on Tuesdays and Fridays, and the Government should have the Morning Sittings on those days. He had regretted to learn that the Prime Minister was going to allow a day Sitting to be taken up with a discussion on bimetalism.

Surely three hours was enough for a Debate on that question. It was said that at the present moment lunatic asylums were populated with those who fell victims to bimetalism. For his own part, he should just as soon think of devoting a day to a discussion on abstract love as to a Debate on bimetalism. The right hon. Gentleman had thrown out a suggestion that he would adopt the same course in Committee on the Home Rule Bill as on the Second Reading, and take the whole of private Members' days.

MR. W. E. GLADSTONE: I did not say I would ask for the whole time of ordinary Sittings, although I said I might ask for precedence.

MR. LABOUCHERE said, he objected to the whole of a private Members' day being taken for the discussion of Government Bills, even as an exception, because it happened that Members on the Ministerial side of the House had important Motions down on two evenings which might be appropriated for the discussion of the Home Rule Bill—one relating to Railway rates and the other to payment of Members. He hoped that the right hon. Gentleman would grant Evening Sittings on those two days. It had been said that Evening Sittings were objectionable, because the House might be counted out. He himself had never been able to understand why the Government should make a House on Tuesdays or Fridays. If a Motion was an important one, surely the Member who made it could find 40 Members to support him. Whilst, if it were unimportant, he did not see why gentlemen should be dragged down in order to make a House for some private Member, when they knew it would be counted out half an hour afterwards. He hoped the Government would take Morning Sittings for the Second Reading Debate on the Home Rule Bill. They would gain nothing, in his opinion, by appropriating a whole day, rather than a Morning Sitting. The House might, perhaps, lose one or two speeches, which would be made in a somewhat thin House, when most Members were at dinner, but one could bear the loss of them, and he did not think the Government would gain a single day by the course they now proposed to adopt.

MR. BARTLEY (Islington, N.) said, he had always endeavoured to support the rights of private, or, as he thought they ought to be called, "unofficial" Members. He thought this was an occasion on which they should support one another in maintaining their distinct rights. Private, or unofficial Members, were an important part of that House; they were the majority in it, and they should hang together in supporting their rights. His hon. Friend had said they were not there as pawns merely to vote as they were told, but they were sent there to represent the various social and other questions in which their constituents were interested and without which, after all, this great nation could not advance. It was quite true the late Government did on one or two occasions take certain time from unofficial or private Members, but they had special reasons for doing so. The present Government, however, were doing it in an altogether different manner, and it was obvious their intention was practically to silence private Members. Reference had been made to the Debate which took place on the 21st April, 1888, on the proposal by the late Government to take Friday evening in each week, for the special purpose of hastening the passage of the Local Government Bill. He would point out that that Motion was moved at the end of April, 1888, whereas the present Motion was being moved before they had reached the end of February, so that there was an enormous difference between the two cases. In the Debate on this question of private Members' time, which took place in April, 1888, the present Prime Minister, referring to the observations of the hon. Baronet the Member for South St. Pancras, said that the hon. Member was absolutely and entirely wrong in stating it had been the practice of Liberal Governments to take private Members' nights for the Second Reading of important Bills. His experience (the right hon. Gentleman added) was that when a Liberal Government was in Office nothing was so rare as the interference with private Members' nights for continuous Debates. And yet before this Parliament had been going on for a whole month the right hon. Gentleman insisted on taking practically the whole time of the House. Let him remind hon. Members what had taken place already this



Session. The Address had been voted in a most remarkably short time, and then they were made to sit on Saturday in order that the Member for Thanet (Mr. J. Lowther) might bring on his Motion relating to pauper aliens—this being the only opportunity that was given for the discussion of this most important subject. The Address was voted on the Saturday, and then the Government took the whole of the Tuesday and Friday following for the introduction of the Home Rule Bill. Hon. Members below the Gangway, who used to be so fond of denouncing the late Government for the slightest interference with the time of private Members, now sat dumb, and were willing to allow the whole time of the House to be taken, whilst even the Member for Northampton acknowledged that he was going to follow the Party Whip. What was the excuse the Government gave for their proposal? It was that their Business was very important, but there never was a Government yet that did not announce to the House that their Business was important. If the Government had proposed to vote Supply there might be some possible reason for this Motion, but they did not want the time for that purpose. [*Cries of "Divide!"*] If hon. Members below the Gangway thought he was going to be howled down they were mistaken. The fact was, that the Government and the Irish Members were afraid of going into Supply; they no doubt desired to take a Vote on Account and to relegate Supply to some period about the end of August. The Government said they were particularly anxious to press forward their Home Rule Bill. They knew perfectly well that Bill would be defeated, and that it would lead to an appeal to the country, and if there was one thing the Liberal Party wished to avoid more than another it was an appeal to the country. This sacrificing of the time of private Members was not done with the intention of pressing on the various measures which the Government had in charge, for could any sane man suppose that this Parliament was going to get through the Home Rule Bill, the Welsh Disestablishment Bill, a Scotch Disestablishment Bill, Local Option, One Man One Vote, the Payment of Members, and a Registration Bill? It was absolutely impossible, and the reason why private Members rights had

been taken away was not to carry on the Business of the nation, but to keep the present Government in power. On Thursday night the Prime Minister was somewhat annoyed at the noble Lord the Member for South Paddington (Lord R. Churchill) speaking so long as he did. The noble Lord made a most remarkable speech. [*Cries of "Question!"*] It was very much to the question, and the Prime Minister objected that there was not time for him to answer it. The right hon. Gentleman consumed a great part of the half-hour in which he had to speak in explaining he had not time to meet the arguments of the noble Lord. He did not wonder at it, because he was not able to meet them. But why did not the right hon. Gentleman agree to adjourn the Debate on Welsh Disestablishment? and then he would have had time to answer the arguments. Again, seven hours was surely too short a time to allow of the discussion for such an important subject as Welsh Disestablishment. It seemed to him private Members ought to make a great stand in defence of their rights. [*Cries of "Divide!"*] They were not going to be howled down. He thought it was clear that during the past month the Opposition had been a great deal too mild, and it had been shown that the more they gave way the more they should be trodden down. He warned the Prime Minister that private Members, if they were to be treated this way, would resist in every possible manner; they would not allow this sort of thing to go on, but would insist on doing those duties which they had been sent to the House to perform.

MR. W. E. GLADSTONE: I want to make a little explanation which, owing to a misapprehension, I omitted to make in my opening statement. An Amendment has been given notice of by the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the Opposition to confine the Morning Sittings to the principal Business connected with Supply and the introduction of Bills. I said that I wished for a more elastic arrangement. My motive was simply and solely this: to get forward and bring to a conclusion the Debate on the Employers' Liability Bill. I did not feel certain that it would be possible to do this in an Evening Sitting. But I am perfectly willing to give a pledge not to introduce any other stage beyond

the introduction of Bills, except as regards the Employers' Liability Bill, and I think it is felt that that is a great measure in which we ought to join hands.

Mr. HUNTER (Aberdeen, N.) said, the impression prevailed among many hon. Members that in this matter the Government were asking too much. The suggestion that had been made by the hon. Member for Northampton, that the Government should be content with the *Morning Sittings*, was one which, he thought, would meet the necessities of the case so far as the Government interests were concerned, and, at the same time, would not wholly and entirely extinguish private Members. Let him remind the right hon. Gentleman that the very first Motion which he extinguished by his present proposal was one dealing with a most urgent and most important question—namely, the question of railway rates. That was a subject which affected Ireland as much as England, if not more. It was a question which affected every trader throughout the country; and unless they could get the question discussed on Tuesday, the 14th March, it was perfectly hopeless to have any discussion on the subject during the present Session.

Mr. MACARTNEY (interposing) said, he desired to move an Amendment which would come before the Amendment which he presumed the hon. Gentleman was going to move. He understood the hon. Gentleman was going to move to exclude Tuesday, the 14th March, but he (Mr. Macartney) intended to move to exclude Tuesday, the 7th March.

Mr. HUNTER said, the Amendment he should move was to omit the proviso altogether, and that would cover the hon. Member's case. He wished to make this appeal to the Government. He said they were in the presence of a legislative fiasco the like of which was not known in the memory of man. They had had the traders of this country and the Railway Companies spending thousands of pounds and engaging in continuous litigation for three years; and he was sure if the traders of this country expected no good from this legislation, at all events they expected no evil. But the result had proved that this legislation which was supposed to be for the benefit of the traders had proved to be solely a protection for the most exorbitant charges

on the part of the Railway Companies, and he had letters from all parts of the country showing that business was being disturbed, and that merchants were sending telegrams abroad stopping orders because the rates were completely opposed to the calculations on which their business transactions were based. They might be told that the Board of Trade were attending to this matter. He should have more confidence in the Board of Trade if he had ever seen that the President of the Board of Trade understood the nature of the crisis which has arisen. But he had watched that right hon. Gentleman in 1888 and since, and he had never seen or heard anything from him that would convince him that the right hon. Gentleman understood the nature of the question; therefore, he for one was not disposed to leave this question under the sole protection of the President of the Board of Trade. On the contrary, he thought it was most urgent that the House should have an opportunity of expressing its views to the Board of Trade; and those gentlemen who represented large trading interests would incur a great responsibility towards the traders of this country if they did not insist that some opportunity should be given during the present Session for the consideration of this question. That was not the only question on which Members on that side of the House were interested. They had also a Motion for the payment of Members; and if the Government would say they were prepared to introduce a measure providing for the payment of Members, it would be unnecessary to proceed with that Motion. Private Members on that side of the House, while prepared to give ample time to the Government, would insist on having some time left to themselves. He ventured to say, if the House would adopt his Amendment to omit the proviso, they would be doing justice both to the Government and private Members. He begged to move that the proviso be omitted.

Mr. HANBURY (Preston) seconded the Amendment to omit the proviso, which, he said, would get rid of the worst feature of the right hon. Gentleman's proposal. He did not know that it was a very great hardship to private Members when there were *Evening Sittings* at which they had two or three hours for ventilating their grievances, but it was

undoubtedly hard when the whole time of private Members was taken away. He hoped the right hon. Gentleman would meet them on this point. Those who were interested in the question of railway rates had ballotted day after day in order to get time to deal with this pressing subject, and after considerable difficulty they got Tuesday, the 14th March. That, however, happened to be the very first day which the right hon. Gentleman proposed to seize for his Home Rule Bill. The right hon. Gentleman had already given way on the subject of bimetallism, and did he not think this large question which affected the whole of the traders of this country and the Railway Companies was much more important than the question of bimetallism? Bimetallism was a subject on which there was a great diversity of opinion; but on the subject of railway rates, and the way in which past legislation in that House had been dealt with, there was hardly a dissentient voice in the House. He fully concurred with the last speaker in supposing the President of the Board of Trade was wholly mistaken in the way he was going to deal with this question.

\*MR. SPEAKER (interposing): The action of the President of the Board of Trade is not relevant to this Motion.

MR. HANBURY could only say he protested against legislation which did injury and harm to the traders of this country.

Amendment proposed, to leave out all the words after the words "those days" to the end of the Question. — (*Mr. Hunter.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question."

\*SIR JOHN LUBBOCK (London University) said, ever since he had had the honour of a seat in that House he had always opposed those Motions for taking the time of private Members, and he had never done so with more confidence than on the present occasion. He thought the House would see he was bound to offer a strenuous opposition to the Motion made by the right hon. Gentleman. If the hon. Member would look at the Resolution in favour of which the Government had made an exception, they would see that the operative part of it was whether a Conference as to the monetary

system, which was to meet in May, should meet somewhat sooner. Now, seeing that some members of that Conference were coming from the United States and Russia, it was practically impossible for the Conference to meet earlier, and yet that was the subject which the Government made an exception in favour of. Now, on the 21st of March he had, after balloting for some years, been fortunate enough to get the first place for his Motion for the earlier closing of shops. A Royal Commission and two Committees of that House had considered this question, and what did they say? They told them that there were thousands of men and women at the present moment working for 80 and 90 hours a week. That was a state of things which affected the health of these unfortunate shop assistants. It was not part of the Newcastle Programme, like the long hours of railway servants—

\*MR. SPEAKER: Order, order! The hon. Baronet is now speaking on a subject quite foreign to the Motion.

\*SIR JOHN LUBBOCK said, he only referred to the hours of railway servants as a parenthesis, and he presumed he was in order in pointing out the importance of his Resolution, which affected the health of thousands of persons, as a reason why it should not come under the operation of the Motion moved by the Prime Minister. The most intense interest was taken in the Resolution by the shop assistants and small shopkeepers throughout the country. They were anxious to obtain shorter hours. They could not obtain these shorter hours except by legislation, and now that, after having ballotted for a place for the Resolution for Sessions, they had been fortunate in securing a first place, the Government was about to take it away from them. Other important Resolutions would also be affected by the Motion. On the 7th March a Resolution in reference to arbitration was on the Paper, Petitions in support of which had been received from 57 out of 62 Trades Councils in the country, and on the 10th March there was a Resolution which had an important relation to the subject before the House, calling attention to—

"The great and growing difficulty in the way of legislation by private Members of the House under the present Rules of Procedure."

*Mr. Hanbury*

He would not allude to the question of railway rates, because that had been well dealt with by previous speakers. The House would, therefore, see that on every private Members' night affected by the Motion there was a question of great and pressing importance to be brought under the notice of the House ; but with reference to the particular Resolution of which he had charge, he would not be doing his duty to the shopkeepers and assistants of the country if he did not make his most respectful, and at the same time most earnest, protest against the proposal of the Government to take away from them the night they had at last secured for the consideration of this great and growing evil.

MR. MACARTNEY (Antrim, S.) said, the tone of the Leader of the House in moving the Motion had been most conciliatory ; but he had always observed that when a Leader of the House desired to do something dangerous to the rights of Members or to infringe the ancient customs of the House, he adopted a most conciliatory tone. He admitted that some of the arguments of the Prime Minister were plausible in the extreme, but he did not think the right hon. Gentleman was justified at that time of the Session in asking private Members to sacrifice the days they had been fortunate enough to secure in the Ballot. The right hon. Baronet (Sir J. Lubbock) had expressed surprise at the Prime Minister excepting the Resolution on bimetallism from his Motion. The right hon. Gentleman had said that he had received a good deal of light and information on that subject recently. Perhaps that was owing to the fact that the right hon. Gentleman, like other Members of the House, had received a circular containing Archbishop Walsh's views on bimetallism. No doubt the right hon. Gentleman was aware that there were a number of Nationalist Members desirous of expounding the views of Archbishop Walsh on bimetallism ; and therefore knowing the influence which that Prelate had on the deliberations of the Government, he did not share the hon. Baronet's surprise that the Prime Minister should have excluded bimetallism from the operation of the Motion. But if the Prime Minister had conciliated the bimetallists, he had not

gone far enough—for the right hon. Gentleman had not conciliated him. He had got a Motion on the Paper which affected the agricultural interests at large of the whole Kingdom, and which hon. Members on both sides of the House favoured. He would be precluded by the Prime Minister's Motion from calling attention to this matter which demanded instant attention, and he had, therefore, every right to complain. But he proposed to show by precedents which had occurred in recent years that private Members had never been asked to give up their days at so early a period in the Session. In 1891, when the Government moved a similar Motion, they had only three Government days before Easter ; in 1892 they had only eight Government days before Easter and only four days before the 31st March, the last day on which they could introduce the Appropriation Bill. This year there were nine Government days available. He was also prepared to show that the Financial Business of the Government was in a very much better position than the Financial Business of the late Government had been when they made their demand last year for the time of private Members. Last year there were 26 Votes to be taken ; this year there were only 21 Votes, and they were not nearly so contentious as the Votes of last year, for the right hon. Gentleman was aware that the most contentious Vote this Session had been so arranged that hon. Members would not be able to raise a discussion on it at all. But the right hon. Gentleman proposed to devote some of the days he would obtain under the Motion not to Supply but to the Government of Ireland Bill. If Supply were urgent it stood to reason that the right hon. Gentleman ought not to be able to put down the Irish Government Bill on Tuesdays and Fridays, and if, on the other hand, Supply was not urgent, there was not one single argument for the Motion which the right hon. Gentleman had asked the House to adopt. The Chief Secretary for Ireland, in a Debate on a similar Motion which took place in 1890, laid it down that a demand of this kind was unprecedented unless the Business of the Government was in an unsatisfactory condition, and the Prime Minister was unable to show that the position of the Government in the

matter of Business was not better than the position of the last Government on the occasions when they had demanded the time of private Members. He further opposed this Motion on the ground that the policy of the present Government was based on principles which had never obtained in any Government before. The Prime Minister had told them in his speech on the Welsh Suspensory Bill that neither he nor the Government ever looked to the merits of a Bill, or whether it was just or fair or prudent, but that they looked merely to the votes that measure would catch. The right hon. Gentleman had made the singular confession that if the Welsh Members were to change their minds on the question of the Disestablishment of the Church, he was quite prepared to change his mind with them. The other Bill which the right hon. Gentleman desired to promote—the Government of Ireland Bill—was not understood by the Liberal Party. [*Cries of "Order!"*] He would not go outside the proper limits of the discussion, and, in conclusion, he would say that he opposed the Motion not only on the ground that the right hon. Gentleman proposed to take away a day he had secured for the discussion of a proposal of great importance and affecting large interests in the Kingdom, but also because the right hon. Gentleman was not justified by the state of Public Business and the condition of the legislative proposals of the Government to ask for so large a concession of the rights of private Members.

DR. CLARK (Caithness) said, he hoped the Prime Minister would accept the Amendment of his hon. Friend (Mr. Hunter). During the last Parliament, when the hon. Member for Northampton and himself moved Amendments to Motions similar to that before the House, they had been supported by a large number of hon. Gentlemen now sitting on the Treasury Bench, and strongly opposed by hon. Gentlemen like the hon. Member for Islington (Mr. Bartley) on the other side of the House. But he and his hon. Friend had not changed their opinion with their seats like hon. Gentlemen opposite. If the Government persisted in taking the whole of the time of the House private Members would be compelled to raise the questions in which

they were interested on Supply; and if the Government did what the late Government had done—put down Supply at the end of the Session, when there was no time for discussion—the opportunity of the Debate on the Address at the opening of next Session would be seized by private Members to bring forward what the right hon. Gentleman looked upon as Votes of Censure on the Government as the only means of getting their grievances attended to. A pledge had been given by the last Government that the Report of Supply or any other Financial Business should not be taken after 1 o'clock on days on which the Morning Sittings were used by the Government. He wished to know whether that pledge would be adhered to by the present Government?

\*MR. JAMES LOWTHER (Kent, Thanet): Mr. Speaker, there is one thing that will be admitted by hon. Members in all parts of the House, and that is, that the invasion of the rights of unofficial Members has been steadily progressing on the part of the various Governments of the day. I appeal to the Prime Minister to turn his back upon the vicious precedents of recent years, and I invite him to go back to those sounder Parliamentary precedents when he first led the House of Commons. It was my good fortune to enter the House at the time that the right hon. Gentleman succeeded Lord Palmerston as Leader of the House, and I think I may with some confidence appeal to him to be guided more by precedents of those days than by precedents of a more recent origin. It has been said that unofficial Members have availed themselves of opportunities which should be placed entirely at the disposal of the Government, and as an instance reference was made to the Debate on the Address. Well, I have often remarked that where attempts are made to unduly curtail the rights and privileges and opportunities of unofficial Members in one direction, their views find a vent in another direction. The Government do not require to be told that sitting on the safety-valve is not a safe method of advancing their rate of speed. The old practice of the House was that every Member—be his position what it might—had an inalienable right of pressing grievances before Supply; but some years ago that privilege was unduly,

and, in my opinion, very unwisely, curtailed, and step by step inroads have been made on the rights of unofficial Members. Unofficial Members have their duties to discharge towards their constituents and towards their own consciences just as much as Governments have; and if they are debarred from calling attention to grievances in a constitutional manner prior to Supply, they are perfectly justified in availing themselves of their remaining opportunities for raising discussions. Why, I ask, is it the interest of the Government that they should procure the whole time of the House? Is it because Governments of these days are more ambitious, and are not content to advance at the same steady rate of speed as satisfied their predecessors. In the times of which I spoke, when the right hon. Gentleman first led the House, Governments did not seek to compass the Disestablishment of Churches and the disintegration of Empires with the rapidity of greased lightning. If they introduced momentous measures they did so with adequate explanation, and subject to proper discussion; and they allowed Parliament the full opportunity to deliberate upon them; they introduced such measures in limited numbers, and they did not attempt to force them at racing speed through the House of Commons. I appeal to the right hon. Gentleman's knowledge of healthier precedents. I was glad to see that the knowledge of Parliamentary practice and Constitutional Law, which the right hon. Gentleman possesses to so unique an extent, enabled him to extricate his colleagues just now from a very serious blunder. Some astute colleague—I do not believe it was the Chancellor of the Exchequer—appears to have thought he could have enabled the Government to hoodwink the House by preparing an Estimate in such a manner that an important item of expenditure, in respect to which public attention has been very largely aroused, could be smuggled through without discussion. The right hon. Gentleman, however, came to the rescue of his indiscreet colleague and put him right before Parliament and the country. I hope he will act in a similar fashion now—that he will make a timely concession to the general feeling of the House, and

will avoid the necessity of a Division on the Amendment before us. The House of Commons has been of recent years very jealous of the privileges of unofficial Members. It does not allow the Government of the day to take unchallenged those privileges which are enjoyed by Members at large. I can well recollect when, on occasions like this, the dividing line was not the floor, but the Gangway; and although, through circumstances over which I have no control, I have been driven to take refuge up here, and by the exercise of the right I possess to take a seat above the Gangway, my sympathies are largely with those below. I hope the Government will see that this action is taken far too early in the Session. The right hon. Gentleman can find no precedent for his Motion beyond the discredited and vicious precedents of the immediate past, and even these precedents furnish him no example of what he now proposes to do. I hope, therefore, he will postpone his Motion for some weeks, and then bring it forward in a form less calculated to arouse the suspicions and the hostility of Members generally of this House.

MR. W. E. GLADSTONE: Mr. Speaker, I will only say a few words on this matter. The right hon. Gentleman says I have brought the Motion forward too early in the Session. I have brought it forward, Sir, under circumstances of very peculiar pressure, and four weeks after the opening of the Session. I supported a substantially similar Motion made by the late Government, unaccompanied by the guarantees we propose of giving Members Tuesday and Friday evenings—within three weeks of the opening of the Session. The right hon. Gentleman seems to think that the general feeling of the House is with him upon this matter. It may be conceded that a majority of the speeches are with the right hon. Gentleman, but I have known occasions, which were doubtless known also to the right hon. Gentleman, when hon. Gentlemen who are favourable to the proposals of the Government think that they perceive in some parts of the House a disposition to prolong the Debate, and who, under these circumstances, thought it well to refrain from speaking. Much depends upon the way in which gentlemen look upon these questions. I have heard it stated that the

10 days occupied on the Address were to be regarded as having been devoted to Government Business. But with certain exceptions the Address has become the property of private Members, who take advantage of it—I will not say unwarrantably—to raise questions in which they feel great interest, and in respect to which they feel they might not be able to secure an independent night for discussion. According to my reckoning, nine out of the ten nights occupied on the Address were nights of private Members, and if that be so, 13 out of the 20 days the House has sat this Session have been given to private Members and seven to the Government. That is my mode of calculating the matter. But, however that may be, what I wish to impress upon the House is that we have upon us very heavy responsibilities. Day after day endeavours are made—and I make no complaint and pass no censure—to increase those responsibilities. The Member for Aberdeen, while taking exception to our proposal for taking some of the time of private Members, has also proposed an addition to those responsibilities, which, he will admit, will require time—that is, he proposes that the Government should undertake a Bill in the present Session for the payment of Members of Parliament. I can assure the House, and I can assure those who are opposed to the Motion as well as those who are in favour of it, that it is nothing but an imperative sense of public duty, public advantage, and public necessity which, after a careful examination of the time at our disposal, and of the obligations we have undertaken—and that we are bound to redeem—has compelled me to place this proposition before the House.

\*MR. GOSCHEN: Mr. Speaker, the right hon. Gentleman has referred to what took place last year, and he has stated that he supported a similar Motion when it was brought forward by the present Leader of the Opposition. That is quite true. It was not a precisely similar Motion, but a Motion fairly analogous to this. On that occasion the Leader of the House stated that my right hon. Friend had raised a very flimsy structure in his speech for so wide a proposition. The argument of my right hon. Friend covered the whole ground, but the right hon. Gentleman called upon him never-

theless to submit a stronger argument. My right hon. Friend had submitted a distinctly strong argument to the House. That argument was, that we were absolutely obliged to deal with the finance that still remained over, and that financial considerations made it almost compulsory to give that time to the Government. I have waited to see, whether there would be any indication from the Treasury Bench that it was in order to get through finance that these demands were now made upon the House, and that the rights of private Members were to be suspended, but no stress whatever has been laid upon finance, and I am surprised to see that it is almost avowedly admitted by the right hon. Gentleman that it is for the purpose of legislation and not for the purposes of finance that this demand is made. [MR. W. E. GLADSTONE: We will take both in time.] Yes; but the other day, when the right hon. Gentleman gave his notice, no allusion was made to finance. Again, in the question which was raised by the Member for Northamptonshire—I do not know whether it was a “put up” question or not—no allusion was made to finance at all; but the right hon. Gentleman has proposed this Motion in the interests of legislation. How are we to regard this Motion? I regard it distinctly as a Motion to enable Her Majesty’s Government to pass the Second Reading of the Bill for the worse government of Ireland, and it is assumed by the right hon. Gentleman so distinctly that it will be taken before Easter that he puts in this proviso—which is now objected to by some hon. Members on his own side—in order to make sure that the Second Reading of the Bill shall be passed before Easter. The right hon. Gentleman said there were things which must necessarily be done before Easter. I ask, is it necessary to pass the Second Reading of this Bill before Easter, and, if so, why? I can imagine reasons why, in the view of the Government, it should be very desirable that the Second Reading should be passed before Easter, but we on this side do not recognise that necessity at all. I suppose the right hon. Gentleman calculates that the Debate on the Second Reading would take some eight days at least, and the right hon. Gentleman would not wish to curtail discussion on so great a subject.

*Mr. W. E. Gladstone*

Here, then, are eight days to spare before Easter—eight days which the right hon. Gentleman thinks should be devoted to this particular measure; but a considerable portion of time will be required, I think, for the finance of the year. It has been pointed out how very much Financial Business remains to be performed; and the right hon. Gentleman had taken the same course that we took last year, and said that finance alone must occupy the time before Easter, he would have made it difficult for us to resist the Motion. But that is clearly not the idea of the Government, and the whole energy which the right hon. Gentleman put in the eloquent last sentence of his speech shows us that he thinks it his bounden duty if he can to get the Second Reading of the Home Rule Bill. We do not feel ourselves under an obligation to render the service to the Government of enabling them to pass the Second Reading of the Bill before Easter, and, therefore, we shall feel it our duty to vote for the Amendment before the House, and afterwards to say "no" to the Resolution of the right hon. Gentleman.

MAJOR RASCH (Essex, S.E.) was bound, as an agricultural Member, to vote for the Amendment of the hon. Member for Aberdeen, and he was bound also to protest against the action of the Government. They knew perfectly well that at the Evening Sitting last week the House was counted out at 8 o'clock; and although the Government had promised to keep a House in future for the Evening Sittings on Tuesday and Friday, they all knew that on these occasions the House would be counted out after the speeches of the Mover and Seconder of the particular Resolutions to be brought forward. On Tuesday, the 7th March, a proposal of the greatest possible interest to the agricultural population—namely, pleuropneumonia—was to have been brought forward by the Member for Antrim, but that would now be cut out. He himself had also a notice of Motion with reference to the agricultural depression, which would share the same fate. He looked upon the action of the Government as an intention to deprecate in every possible way the claims put forward on behalf of the agricultural interest.

MR. A. C. MORTON (Peterborough) could not very well agree with the Opposition on this occasion, and especially with

the opposition of the Member for North Islington, because he remembered in the late Parliament, when efforts were made to get attention paid to the wants and requirements of private Members, they rarely or rather never had the assistance and support of hon. Gentlemen. Something had been said about Supply. He was very anxious to discuss Supply, and he should in future be more anxious to discuss it than ever he had been in the past, because he had now with him a majority pledged as much to economy as he was himself, whose efforts, he hoped, would lead to practical good. He admitted the truth of what had been said by the Leader of the House as to the imperative needs of the Government and the Liberal Party at the present time, and, therefore, he was willing to make sacrifices he would not have been willing to make under other circumstances. He considered that of the four weeks of the present Session three had been occupied by the Opposition in long discussions on the introduction of Bills, without having these Bills in their hands or being properly acquainted with their contents. For his part, he should have wished that the Government had met a fortnight earlier, and he would now suggest that at the Morning Sittings between now and Easter they should take Supply and go on regularly with it. He hoped ample opportunity would be given for discussing the question of railway rates and charges, which was purely a Radical question, and which last year received very little support from Members opposite, who now affected such an interest in the subject. There was a second question, also a Radical question, which he hoped they should have time adequately to discuss, and that was the one relating to arbitration. No one could accuse him of unduly taking up the time of the House this Session, for out of kindness to the Government he withdrew his Amendment to the Address relating to the appointment of Justices in the country, and which, by-the-bye, was the most important Amendment on the Address. He should like to ask the Government if they intended to proceed with their Justices Qualification Bill which stood on the Order Paper? He was sorry private Members' time should have to be interfered with at all; but he admitted this was an important Session, and he regretted that instead of



having that real assistance which they might expect from hon. Gentlemen opposite, now they were in opposition there seemed to be an inclination on their part to waste time. He trusted the Government would give way and agree to the first Amendment, and also that they would take Supply in good time so as to afford ample opportunities for discussion.

MR. STOREY (Sunderland) said, he was one of those who in former Parliaments—no matter which Government was in power—had always stood up for the rights of private Members. But there was this difference between the present and former Parliaments: In former Parliaments private Members on both sides of the House combined to press the question on the Government of the day; but in the last Parliament, with one or two rare exceptions, whenever they pressed on the Conservative Party the rights of private Members, hon. Members opposite, who were now so anxious about these rights, showed them a face of flint. When hon. Members opposite asked him now, as a Radical, to support them, he intended to look at it exactly from the Radical standpoint, and to ask himself what did they, as Radicals, lose by accepting the Government proposal? As far as he understood, they lost two things: First of all, the Member for Swansea did not get on with his Motion regarding railway rates. But how did they stand with regard to railway rates? The Board of Trade at the present time were pressing that matter with great severity on the Railway Companies, and the President of the Board of Trade had given a public undertaking that if he could not manage quietly to get something done he would take public means in that House; therefore, he dismissed that. The other right which they lost was the discussion of the Motion for the payment of Members. What they, as Radicals, wanted the the Government to do on that question was to make up their minds quickly. They had been told the Government required this extra time in order to pass the Home Rule Bill. What he wanted to see passed was the Home Rule Bill, therefore he should prefer to treat this as an exceptional year, and give the Government the time they needed. It was not every year they proposed to remodel their Constitution. That was the great enter-

prise to which the Government had summoned them, and he did not intend to be drawn by hon. Members opposite into any vote which would have the appearance of defeating the Government that had this great matter in charge; therefore, he intended, no matter what he might be called, to support the Government.

MR. KENYON (Denbigh) wished to know whether, in the event of this Motion passing the House, the First Lord of the Treasury would consent to abandon the date for the premature "Massacre of the Innocents," so far as related to the following Bills mentioned in the Queen's Speech:—The Bill for shortening the duration of Parliaments, the Bill for equalising the franchise, the Bill for creating Parish Councils, and the Welsh Suspensory Bill? If not, would the latter Bill be made the first Order of the Day upon the first available opportunity?

Question put.

The House divided:—Ayes 276; Noes 245.—(Division List, No. 13.)

Main Question proposed.

MR. BUCHANAN rose in his place, and claimed to move, "That the Question be now put."

Question, "That the Main Question be now put," put, and agreed to.

Main Question put accordingly.

The House divided:—Ayes 270; Noes 228.—(Division List, No. 14.)

Resolved, That, on and after Friday next, until Easter the House do meet on Tuesday and Friday at Two o'clock, and that the provisions of Standing Order 56 be extended to the Morning Sittings on those days: Provided always, that if the Government of Ireland Bill be appointed for any of such days the House do meet at Three o'clock, and the proceedings on that Bill do have precedence of the Orders of the Day and Notices of Motion.—(Mr. W. E. Gladstone.)

## LIQUOR TRAFFIC (LOCAL CONTROL) BILL.

### MOTION FOR LEAVE.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EX-CHEQUER (Sir WILLIAM HARCOURT, Derby), in asking for leave to bring in a Bill to establish Local Control over the Traffic in Liquor, said: Sir, it is said, and I think truly said, that the questions which most interest both sides of the

Mr. A. C. Morton

House are social questions, and it is my duty to-night to bring under the consideration of the House a social question which I think everyone will admit is of the very first magnitude and of the greatest urgency—I mean the question of temperance reform. It is not necessary that I should occupy the time of the House in enlarging upon the importance of such a question, or the greatness of the evils with which the measure has to deal, or of the primary claim which it consequently has upon the attention of the House. If there is any matter to which, by the voice of the nation, this Parliament is pledged above all others I think it is that of dealing with the question of temperance. In many questions which are brought before the House it is considered necessary to make a demonstration of the evils that you require to remedy. That demonstration in this case is altogether superfluous. We are, unfortunately, too well acquainted with the nature of that evil, of its extent, and of the necessity for the application of a remedy. This is no new question. It is one which has exercised the mind of the country, and which, I think I may say, has affected the conscience of the people for at least a generation. I speak in the presence of men who have given a lifetime to their labours on this question, and who, I trust, before long are about to witness the consummation of the hopes which they have so long entertained. I see behind me my hon. Friend the Member for Cumberland (Sir W. Lawson), who, through good report and through evil report, has sustained the heat and burden of the day upon this great question, and we who come as later labourers into the field—but not so late as you suppose, as I shall be able to show presently—we may congratulate him upon the prospect of reaching the goal which he has so long desired. Now, it has been said truly that the House of Commons never presents itself to greater advantage than when it is dealing with questions which are not of the character of Party questions. The question of temperance, I hope and believe I may truly say, whatever it may have been in past times, is not to-day a Party question. I believe that there sit upon that side of the House men, whatever their particular views upon the subject may be, who are as convinced and as earnest temperance reformers as

those who sit upon this side of the House, and we may hope they will join with us in the common desire to arrive at some satisfactory solution of a question that has been too long delayed. We are anxious—we declare ourselves anxious every day—for the poverty of great masses of the people of this country, but who is there in this House or out of this House who does not know what is the mainspring and the source of that poverty? Who does not know that it is in drink that is to be found the *causa causans* of that misery? We desire to see the wages of the working classes increased and improved, but what is the object of increasing and improving those wages if the margin that you have is to be dissipated in drink? The reduction of the hours of labour is one of the questions of the day; but are we to take no care of what is to be the employment of that leisure which we add to the life of the working classes? Crime, though it is largely diminished, happily, in this country, is still a great blot upon our social system, and he who knows anything of the matter knows this: that of all the sources and causes of crime, the most fertile is to be found in drink? An hon. Member opposite challenged me, I thought, with an ironical cheer, as to the date of my conversion upon this subject. That question was once asked me in the House of Commons, and my answer—it was a true and a sincere answer—was that it was from the date when in the responsibilities of the Home Department I had cognisance of those causes of crime which led many a man, aye, and many a woman, to the loss of liberty and life, and brought them even to a shameful death. Those are thoughts and reflections which are not easily effaced from the mind or conscience. Now if these things are so—and I think there is no man on either side of the House who denies that—we who are the representatives of the people, who are responsible for the well-being of the people, have to ask ourselves whether we have done anything in the past, or whether we intend to do something in the future, to remedy those evils, to stay this plague which is amongst us. What do we see in our midst? Go to the flaring gin-shop with the flaunting misery you will find there, and consider the men and women who

make the congregations in these places, and ask yourselves whether Parliament has done what it ought to do to put a stop to such scenes as you behold. Go to the country villages, go among those pleasant spots of which there are so many in this fortunate land, and what will you see there? At one end of the village you will see the church and the chapel, at the other end you will see the savings bank, and between the two you will see three or four, or it may be half a dozen, public-houses, which upset the services of the church, and which absorb the savings of the people. Is that a state of things which we can contemplate; is that not a state of things that we ought to do something to put an end to? Aye, this is all the doing of the laws which you have made, because this is a traffic which exists by a creation of the law; it is a regular monopoly of the law, and we have to congratulate ourselves upon the monopoly that we have created, and that we profess to regulate. It is not the people who license those houses, it is not the people who maintain them where they are. They cannot do away with them if they choose. They are planted there by an authority which is outside and independent of the community whose welfare is so deeply affected by them. No, Sir, I venture to affirm that no man can say that Parliament has hitherto done what it ought to do in such a matter as this. I do firmly believe that, by the will and by the mandate of the people of to-day, this Parliament is called upon to achieve that beneficent work. The action of legislation in such matters is naturally, perhaps pardonably, slow. In order to deal with powerful interests and inveterate custom, you must have the gathered momentum of popular opinion which shall compel legislation which the country demands. We have all had, I think, for many a long year an uneasy feeling that something ought to be done, which has not been done, but there has been a great deal of hesitation and a great deal of uncertainty as to what ought to be done. I believe the time has come when there is a conviction that Parliament ought to make up its mind, and will make up its mind, what is to be done. The Government are not unaware that in navigating this sea they are navigating an ocean that is covered with many wrecks. The question is not

whether anything is to be done. I do not think that question will be asked. But the question which will emphatically be asked is, what is to be done? The existing state of things is the result of what is known as the licensing system, and it is natural enough that in the earliest attempts at dealing with this matter efforts were principally directed to dealing with the licensing system by Licensing Bills. That was the nature of the attempt 20 years ago made by Mr. Bruce when he was Home Secretary. I desire, in the first instance, in order to clear the ground, to inform the House that the Bill I ask leave to introduce is not a Licensing Bill at all. It does not profess to deal with the licensing question. The licensing is one which requires to be dealt with, and which will have to be dealt with. It never can be, in my opinion, a satisfactory system that licensing should depend on persons who have no popular mandate whatever in the matter, and therefore no doubt Licensing Boards will hereafter have to be created, and will probably have to devise a Licensing Committee. I desire to say nothing in disparagement of the licensing magistrates. I believe that, especially in late years, according to their lights and according to their power, they have discharged their duty honestly in these matters, and I cast no reflections on them. But they are not a popular body; they have not the force of popular opinion; and the consequence of that has been that they wanted the courage and the firmness requisite in dealing with matters of this description. I wish, first of all, to state that the Bill I have to lay before the House is not a Licensing Bill. This is important, because if the question is raised whether the Bill is for the reduction of the number of licences, I say it is not. That can only be done by a Licensing Board. These are very important questions, and proper to be raised, but questions which do not belong to the Bill I have to lay before the House. In my opinion, no mere Licensing Bill will ever go to the root of this question. You have to go deeper than that; if you are to do any good you must cut to the quick in this matter. You have to deal with a great national evil. On what principle are you going to deal with this great national evil? If you are to strike an effective

blow at a great national evil you must appeal to the conscience and the voice of the people. You must appeal to that great democratic principle which evokes the vital energy of the popular voice and of the popular conscience. You cannot trust interests so vast as this; you cannot cope with evils so deeply rooted by leaving them to the discretion of any selected class or of any delegated body. If you hope to form habits of moral obligation you must make your appeal direct to the conscience of the people themselves. If the people are to be reformed they must be the authors of their own reformation. These were the principles upon which the Government desired to found their measures of reform. This measure is not a measure of any novelty or any complexity. To describe it in a single sentence, it is a Bill to establish the control of the liquor traffic by the popular vote operating through the direct veto of the people. After many phases of opinion, and many variations in the former legislation, this, I think, is the leading and fundamental principle which has commended itself to the great body of the temperance party. I know this is not the opinion which has been always very universally held. I am aware that there are many, or were many, and may be many now, who think that instead of referring this question directly to the people's veto you had better delegate it to some of your Representative Bodies. I speak of that opinion with all the more respect because it is one, in former years, I strongly held myself. The first speech that I made in this House is just 10 years ago, on the Motion of local option of my hon. Friend the Member for Cumberland (Sir W. Lawson), and I argued in that direction; but I may be permitted just to read a sentence of the conclusion of that speech. I was speaking not merely for myself, but for the Government, of which I was a Member. I said—

"I am speaking distinctly on behalf of the Government as a whole, as well as expressing my own personal opinions. We shall vote for giving this power, because of the persons who are interested in it; that is to say, to the inhabitants of the localities, reserving, of course, the right to determine how that opinion is to be ascertained."

**MR. GOSCHEN** (St. George's, Hanover Square): The date?

**SIR W. HARCOURT**: You will find that on April 27th, 1883, page 1315, in *Hansard*. I expressed upon that occasion a preference—there is no reason to conceal it—for the delegation of those powers at that time to the Municipal Councils and the County Councils, making this declaration on the part of the Government in respect of local option. I made that declaration in all its breadth, reserving an opinion as to the manner in which the voice of the nation should be taken. Well, Sir, I will say very frankly why I, and many others, have changed their opinions upon that subject. This course is one the Government cannot recommend, because from the elections and developments of the Councils we do not think it would be a convenient or possible thing to impose upon these Bodies the duties of dealing with the liquor question. We believe it would interfere very much with the character of their election, and occupy their time very much in matters with which they would probably rather be without. You have not imposed upon them the duty of dealing with education, and you have not given them charge of the Poor Laws. I have the honour of speaking in the presence, I am sure, of many Members on both sides of the House who have had a great experience in this question of Local Bodies and Municipal Councils and of County Councils, and I should be extremely surprised to find that there was any member of those Councils who would get up and say that he desired that the dealing with the liquor question should be imposed on those Bodies. This is frankly the reason why we abandon that idea. Their jurisdiction is happily concerned with matters which, I believe, are of a more neutral character, and it would impart and introduce into those Councils matters of a contentious character with which they would be much rather without. I think I may set aside all proposals of that character, and I would, in reference to this subject, say that if you come to deal with the licensing question in the future, with which this Bill does not deal, in my opinion you must have a separate representative Licensing Board, distinct altogether from County Councils and Municipal Councils, for the reason I have stated. This is a view in which I rather gather is one in which both sides

of the House are inclined to concur. The general proposal I have to submit to the House is that the question whether any house for the retail sale of intoxicating liquor on or off the premises within a limited area should be determined by the direct vote of the ratepayers taken at stated intervals. That is a sufficiently accurate description of the main project and plan of the Bill.

An hon. MEMBER: What about grocers' licences?

SIR W. V. HARCOURT: That includes grocers' licences. Hon. Gentlemen will understand what I mean when I say that all Justices' licences are distinguished from Excise licences. As a rule, Justices' licences mean retail licences, and Excise licences mean wholesale licences of brewers, wine merchants, and so forth. Justices' licences are what I mean when I speak of licences in the Bill. I have said that this is no Party question, and I think I am entitled to say so. One of the most careful and elaborate attempts which of late years has been made to settle this question was that made by the noble Lord the Member for Paddington (Lord R. Churchill) in 1890. He stated, in asking leave to introduce that Bill, that he was in communication with the liquor trade, Sir W. Lawson, the Temperance Associations, and particularly with the Church of England Temperance Association. He introduced that Bill—a more ambitious Bill than that of which I have charge—as a Licensing Bill, and also a Direct Veto Bill. What he said on the subject of the direct veto part of the Bill is so pertinent to what I have to lay before the House that I will ask leave to read an extract from his speech. The noble Lord said—

"The main principle of the Bill is popular control over the issue of licences."

That is the principle accepted—I think I may say, which has been accepted by both sides of the House. I will go on to quote another observation of the noble Lord, a most pertinent remark, and well expressed, as everything that comes from the noble Lord is. He said—

"It is alleged that you cannot make people sober by Act of Parliament. You cannot, it is true; but I tell you what you can do, you can give the people by Act of Parliament the power to make themselves sober."

Well, Sir, a more excellent answer to a more shallow fallacy was never given

even by the noble Lord. Now, what was the description he gave of his method? Having described the earlier part of the Bill, he said this—

"But I go even further in applying the principle of popular control. I have provided that, in certain circumstances and under certain conditions, there should be brought into operation that which is called the direct veto—that is to say, that, if in a certain parish"

—I ask the House to observe that the area taken was the parish—"two-thirds"—you will observe there also the proportion is taken at two-thirds—

"of the ratepayers on the municipal register voted for the prohibition of the granting of licences, the vote should operate against the granting of all retail licences. There is a good deal to be said in favour of the equity of such a proposal. On the face of it, it is not unfair that where you find a large and preponderating majority in a restricted area who desire to live under conditions which, in their belief, conduce to order and morality—it is hard on such a majority that a comparatively small minority should be able to prevent them having their way. And what makes it especially hard in this case is that the power which you refuse to entrust, or which you may possibly refuse to entrust, to so large and preponderating a majority is a power which, under the law of the land, is actually enjoyed by the owners of property. An owner of many thousands of acres, or of a large portion of a town, may, and frequently does, no matter how much the persons on that property may object, prohibit the establishment of a single house for the sale of intoxicating liquor. Therefore, you allow to the owner of property a power which may be exercised in the most tyrannical manner, which I believe in certain cases has been exercised tyrannically, and which may be exercised tyrannically, and which may be exercised against the wishes of the majority of the people. I think there is a great deal to be said for allowing a preponderating majority of the inhabitants to prohibit the establishment of houses for the retail sale of drink."

I think it is impossible to put forth more clearly and more accurately the principles on which the direct veto is founded. Well, in the last Parliament the sower went forth to sow, and his seed fell on stony ground. It never put forth either a germ or brought forth a seed, but still I hope that that seed is not altogether lost, and that in the present Parliament we may have the advantage of the countenance and support of the noble Lord the Member for Paddington. I observe also that on the back of that Bill there was the name of a gentleman who is no longer a Member of this House, but who sat with the noble Lord, and who for many years rendered yeoman's service to the

temperance question—I mean Sir Henry Selwin-Ibbetson. And there was also, I am glad to say, the names of the hon. Member for South Kensington, and the hon. Member for South Belfast. I am adverting to this Bill in order to maintain my proposition that this is not a Party question, because in the Bill to which I have referred, and in the argument I have quoted, I find an exact analogue and counterpart of the Bill I am going to ask the House to accept. I am perfectly aware, and I ought fairly to state, that the noble Lord accompanied the Bill and his proposal with a strong declaration on the subject of compensation. I shall, of course, have a word to say on the subject presently. But the noble Lord did not in that Bill insist on that, because he introduced a Bill on the direct veto without any scheme or any clause dealing with compensation at all.

SIR R. WEBSTER: He was a private Member.

SIR W. HARCOURT: Yes; I know the Bill was the Bill of a private Member, but there are methods by which a private Member can express his ideas on such a subject. I have no doubt the noble Lord will at a future stage of this discussion be able to explain to us what his views on compensation are. Having said this much, I will just, briefly I hope, point out the particulars of the Bill to the House. It is a short Bill, and a simple Bill, and I think I shall do best by reading the first clause of the Bill, which practically contains the main substance of the measure. It says—

“One-tenth of the electors living in the areas hereinafter mentioned”

I will say a word on the area directly—  
“may address a requisition in writing to the authorities hereinafter mentioned”

I will explain that directly—

“requiring the authority to cause a poll of the electors to be taken on the question whether total closing shall be adopted within the area—that is to say, whether a grant or renewal of licences for the sale of intoxicating liquor within the area shall be permitted—thereupon a poll shall be taken in accordance with the requisition in the manner directed by this Act.”

Then—

“If a majority of two-thirds of the persons voting on the above resolve the question in the affirmative, then while the resolution is in force no licence shall—except as by this Act provided—be granted or renewed for the sale of intoxicating liquor within the area.”

Then—

“When a poll has been taken in any area on the above question a further poll on the same question shall not be taken before the expiration of three years from the date when the resolution came into force, or if the question is resolved in the negative from the date of the poll.”

That really contains the main substance of the Bill.

MR. GOSCHEN: Who are the electors?

SIR W. HARCOURT: The electors will be the municipal electors, the people who elect the Municipal Councils in the boroughs and the County Councils in the counties. That includes, of course, the women, who are deeply interested in this matter. There are one or two points in this part of the Bill on which I ought to say a word. First of all, as to the two-thirds. The Government adopted that, because from the temperance party itself it has a great authority for that proportion. I have drawn it, I may say, from the original Permissive Bill of the hon. Member for Cumberland (Sir Wilfrid Lawson), for that included a two-thirds majority; to come down to later times, the Welsh Bill and the Direct Veto Bill of 1890 had also a two-thirds majority, the Irish Bill of 1890 had a two-thirds majority, the Bill of the noble Lord the Member for Paddington had a two-thirds majority, and the Manchester Bill also had a two-thirds majority, and another Bill, the Westminster Bill, had a two thirds majority. Therefore the Government have adopted as the majority for total prohibition a majority of two-thirds. As to the authority to take the poll, I do not think that that is very material, but it will be the Council in the Borough and the Urban Sanitary District Authority, and for the parish the Overseers of the parish. Their office however, will only be ministerial—they will have to take the poll. The voters, as I have already said in answer to the right hon. Gentleman opposite, will be the municipal voters. The area which we propose to take is the parish. From the first time I ever spoke upon this subject in this House I said that the question was very much a question of area. Now, the smaller the area in my opinion the better, because the more accurately you get the real opinion of the community. If you have a very large area, you may have one part of the area entirely objecting to your proposals, and over-

powering by the voting power all the other portions of the area. No doubt the areas will be very irregular, because parishes are very irregular; some are very large and some very small, but we cannot help that. I do not think it would have been a wise thing to have proposed to construct a new area. First of all you would have had great delay, and in the second place we have areas enough, perhaps too many, in the country already. In the boroughs, if it is a small borough we take the whole borough; if it is a large borough we take the wards as the unit.

**MR. JAMES STUART:** What is the unit for London?

**SIR W. HARCOURT:**

"In the County of London any district of a Sanitary Authority within the meaning of Section 99 of the Public Health (London) Act, 1891, or if any such district being outside the City of London, is divided into wards or consists of several parishes, then any such ward or parish."

That is the technical way in which it has been described. It has been very carefully considered in the Local Government Board Office.

**SIR MARK STEWART:** Does the Bill apply to Scotland?

**SIR W. HARCOURT:** Yes; it does apply to Scotland, and not to Ireland.

Several hon. MEMBERS: Why not?

**SIR W. HARCOURT:** Well, there is another Bill before the House. We think that this is a matter which the Irish ought to determine for themselves. The definition of licences will be found at the end of the first clause. It is very short. In this section the expression "licence" has the same meaning as in the Licensing Act of 1872, which really means the Justices' licence as distinguished from the brewers' and wine licences. The vote will be by ballot, and there are strong provisions against corrupt practices and illegal expenditure. We are very anxious that there should not be expensive elections. We have prohibited absolutely as illegal any expenses except the actual expenses of taking the ballot, so that agents' committees and anything of that kind will be illegal expenditure. I come now to a point upon which I expect probably we shall be exposed to some criticism—namely, the point of the exemptions from the operation of the Bill. I wish

at once to say that this is a Bill which is not conceived in any spirit of narrow fanaticism. We do not desire, or intend, or pretend, to put down the use and consumption of liquor by persons in their own houses, or, if they have no houses of their own, in the places where they reside or where they take their meals. I believe if we were to attempt anything of that kind we should be met with a violent resistance, and probably a violent reaction in this country, and nothing could be more injurious to the cause of temperance. This Bill is directed against the bar of the gin-palace and the tap-room of the public-house and the beer-shop. It is not intended to prevent the consumption of liquor by such people as desire or require it, whether travelling on the railway or whether they are in hotels and inns for public accommodation, or at eating houses where people who have no homes of their own take their ordinary meals. The section referring to the exemptions is as follows:—

"Nothing in this Act shall prevent the grant or renewal of licences for the sale of intoxicating liquors on premises intended to be used in good faith exclusively for all or any of the following purposes:—(a) For refreshment rooms on a railway for persons arriving at or departing by railway; (b) for an inn or hotel for the accommodation of travellers or persons lodging therein; (c) for an eating-house for persons taking meals on the premises."

Then in the same section this statement is made—

"There shall be attached to every such licence such conditions as the licensing authority think necessary or proper for preventing the use of the premises for any other purpose than that specified in the licence, and if any person commits or permits any breach of these conditions he shall be liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding £50, and if he is the licensee, to the forfeiture of his licence."

These restrictions are not directed to the ordinary habits of people in the places where they reside or the places where they take their meals. They are directed against what I may describe as "tippling." Now I come to the question of compensation. I have mentioned that the Bill of the noble Lord the Member for Paddington (Lord Randolph Churchill), for reasons which he then stated, did not attempt any scheme of compensation. I have no desire to revive the controversies of bygone days. My predecessor and I have broken many a lance over this question of compensation

in former days; but remembering what took place in the discussions of those times and on the Local Government Bill of 1888, the House will be prepared for the declaration it is my duty to make, that the Government do not admit the claim for pecuniary compensation for the extinction of licences, in their nature annually terminable, and we make no proposal for compensation of that character. So long ago as 1871, in the early days of this controversy, Mr. Bruce, when he introduced his Licensing Bill, made this statement, which I think cannot be controverted—

“This House has never recognised any vested interest in this species of property, or any right to compensation, yet it had frequently interfered with the trade.”

That is a proposition which cannot be denied. What interference has the House made with the trade? It has closed public-houses in Scotland, in Ireland, and in Wales on Sunday. It has taken away one-seventh of the trade, and in many cases the most profitable part of the trade, and yet the question of compensation has never been admitted nor dreamed of.

\*MR. BONSOR: Will the right hon. Gentleman quote the figures upon which he bases that statement that one-seventh of the trade has been taken away?

SIR W. HARCOURT: Well, I take one day out of seven, and that is one-seventh.

MR. BONSOR: What about the revenue? Will the right hon. Gentleman tell us that the revenue has fallen off to the extent of one-seventh in Scotland, Ireland, or Wales, where the public-houses have been closed on Sundays?

SIR W. HARCOURT: I should be very glad to tell the hon. Gentleman that the more days we struck off the more the revenue increased. That would be a very satisfactory settlement of the question. But the Magistrates have got the power to extinguish licences. They have exercised that power always, and always without compensation, in former times much more rarely than in recent times. But of late years, since the law has been made clear—it always was the law—especially since the case of “*Sharp v. Wakefield*,” the Justices have acted with much more decision and boldness upon

their powers than they did before. I have moved in successive years for a Return of licences that have been refused simply on the ground that there were too many houses, although there was no misconduct on the part of the holders. The last Return was for the years 1890-91. In these two years they refused to renew 61 fully-licensed victuallers' houses, 11 beer-houses, and 31 other licences, and in not one of these cases was any compensation given. Hon. Members may know better the value of those houses than I do, but be the value little or great, be the number many or few, the Magistrates, in the exercise of their jurisdiction, have terminated those licences without any compensation. I, therefore, maintain that upon no legal or Parliamentary ground can a claim be set up for pecuniary compensation. But, considering the limited application of the principle up to this time, we consider that the trade, and especially the publican himself, is entitled to fair notice of the alteration in the practice and the introduction of a new authority in this matter, and we are of opinion that a reasonable time should be given to them to accommodate their practice and their position to the changed condition of things. I have heard sometimes of what is called a “time compensation.” I do not know whether that is the accurate phrase, but the House will understand what the meaning of it is. In this Bill we propose to give to all those engaged in the trade a notice, which is to be a three years' notice, that the condition of things is changed, and that they will be subject at the expiration of that three years to the operation proposed in this Bill. We find this view has commended itself to many of the important Temperance Associations, and it has been introduced to them as a modification of the direct veto. I should explain, in connection with this, that during that period we do not interfere with the authority of the Licensing Magistrates. Their authority will remain as it was before. They will renew the licences if they think fit, and refuse if they choose, just as they do at present. I should like to explain to the House exactly how this will operate as regards the direct popular veto. The vote may be taken at once, or it may be postponed. You may take it this year, or next year, or the year



after. If you take it at once on the passing of the Bill, it will not operate upon that area in respect of which it is taken until the expiration of the third year. If you take it a year after, then there will be two years' notice. If you take it in third year, there will be one year's notice. Therefore, there will always be one year, because we are of opinion that a man ought not to be turned out of house and home without moderate and adequate notice. That is the principle upon which we have proceeded, because we provide that after three years there will always be one year's grace. It will be objected that this Bill does not deal with the principle of reduction of the number of licences. I find it is impossible to do that unless we introduce Licensing Boards, and a whole system of licensing reform. That may, and I hope will, come hereafter, at no long distance of time, but it will be impossible to introduce it now. The same observation applies to the limitation of new licences. We cannot deal with that, because you may have a new part of a town—a new area where the population may desire to have new licences, and a desire to extinguish the old licences. But, then, you must have a body like a Licensing Board of Magistrates to exercise a discretion in that matter. The resolution can be rescinded precisely upon the same conditions and in the same manner as originally passed. It can only be altered at an interval of three years. We have done that in order that the communities may not be constantly vexed every year by elections upon this highly controversial subject. At the close of the three years it may be proposed to rescind, if the districts have agreed to prohibition, or, where they have rejected prohibition, then it may be proposed a second time.

\*MR. CAINE: Rescinded by the same majority—two-thirds?

SIR W. HARCOURT: Yes, by the same majority. There is only one other topic to which it is necessary that I should refer, but it is one which has created a good deal of difference in the minds of the temperance party itself. It is the question of Sunday closing. That is a matter upon which the heart of the temperance party is strongly set, some from temperance motives, some mainly from religious motives. The

Government are extremely anxious in every practicable manner to give effect to that demand—a demand with which they entirely sympathise. I am quite aware that many temperance reformers think that there is only one course to take in that matter, and that is to pass a universal compulsory Sunday Closing Bill for England, as is the case in Scotland, Ireland, and Wales. I am bound to say I do not, and the Government do not, concur in that. After careful consideration, they are of opinion that this is not the best, or even the most practical method of dealing with the question. No greater mistake can be made in any legislation, and, above all, in legislation which touches the habits, sentiments, and customs of the people than to overrun the sentiments of the people themselves. If you do that you will produce a dangerous reaction, which will probably do more harm to the temperance cause than anything else. The advance of Sunday closing has been a piecemeal advance. You began with Scotland, where it was accepted almost without a murmur years ago. The next step was Ireland, and the last step was Wales. I have myself in this House assisted in carrying to the Second Reading Bills for Sunday Closing in Cornwall and other districts of the country. Therefore, the principle on which you have acted has been to apply Sunday closing to those who are prepared and willing to accept it. You have never attempted to press Sunday closing by a universal law upon populations who might not be ready to accept it, and who, on the contrary, might be disposed to reject it. The Government at least have come to the conclusion that in this part of the United Kingdom there is not at present a condition of things which would justify or warrant universal compulsory Sunday closing, without regard to the sentiments of the particular locality. There are parts of the Kingdom where it could safely be done—places like Cornwall and other districts in the country. I have expressed the opinion equally strongly, in Office and out of Office, that such legislation could not safely be applied to London, and that if you attempted it it would be utterly unwise, unsafe, impolitic, and unjust. There are other places of which the same thing can be said, and to enforce on the inhabitants of such places restric-

*Sir W. Harcourt*

tions which are repugnant to the majority would, in my opinion, be a most foolish and unwise policy. It would inevitably excite a spirit of resentment, and the reaction would be most injurious to the cause of temperance. We have come, therefore, to the conclusion that Sunday closing, like the more general veto, should be subject in each locality to the direct vote of the community which it affects. But as this restriction is more limited than total prohibition, we are of opinion it ought not to be subject to the same limitation. We are of opinion that it should be determined by a simple majority, and that it should not be postponed in its operation, but take immediate effect. It will be applicable to the same areas, and the time of its operation will be the same as in the case of total prohibition. Under these provisions Sunday closing will be accomplished at once by the majority of any parish that desires to have it. I should suppose that Cornwall, and other parts of the country which are of the same mind, would have it at once. In our opinion, this part of the Bill is the one that will have the widest and most immediate operation, and it is therefore one to which we attach great value. There are large parts of the country where Sunday closing will become law by the well-ascertained will of the majority of the people, and will be accepted by the minority with acquiescence, and I think contentment, as it has been in Ireland, Scotland, and Wales; and when its beneficial effects are perceived it will extend its example to other quarters. If, as the most ardent advocates of Sunday closing believe, every part of the country is prepared to accept Sunday closing, this Bill will do all they desire. But, take the other hypothesis—supposing there are places where there is a majority against it—are you going by force to impose on that majority a state of things they do not desire? In my opinion, that would be a most unwise and unsafe thing to do. At least, that is not a proposal that the Government can recommend to this House. They wish that legislation on Sunday closing, like all other legislation, should rest on the ascertained will of the majority of the people who are affected by it. If that is true of all legislation, especially is it true of legislation of this kind. Now, Sir, I know the difference of opinion

that exists on this subject, but I would humbly venture to commend these considerations to the thoughtful reflection of the temperance party. I entreat them not, by grasping at a shadow, to lose the substance which is offered to them in this Bill. I sincerely believe that the provisions of this Bill will secure Sunday closing over a great part of the Kingdom; indeed, in every parish where it can be safely applied. The responsibility will be great of those who reject such a proposal as this. At least, the Government, who have the same object in view, cannot take on themselves that responsibility of declining to lay before the House of Commons a measure which the Government believe will accomplish that object. I have generally voted for all Bills which proposed Sunday closing. I do not think I have voted against a Sunday Closing Bill on the principle I have often heard my hon. Friend the Member for Cumberland advance, that he would vote for any Bill that tended in that direction; but I have always, as in the case of the Cornish Bills and the Local Government Bill, regarded this question on the ground of local opinion; and I have not departed from that. I will ask gentlemen of the temperance party who may be disposed to reject this scheme to reflect the Parliamentary history of this question. In the year 1885 Lord Salisbury made a celebrated declaration in the direction of local option, and especially with regard to Sunday closing, in his speech at Newport. In 1888 there was a clause in the Local Government Bill of the late Government which would have given local option in the case of Sunday closing, and, mind you, there no question of compensation came in. Well, I made an effort, which right hon. Gentlemen opposite will remember, to keep that clause in the Bill. The Government do not wish to revive ancient controversy, and I only wish to state the declaration which I then made to show that the proposals I am now making are identical. I said—

“In his view the proper principle was that each locality should judge for itself in this matter, for he believed the greatest mischief that they could do in a case of the kind was to attempt by Parliamentary enactment to impose reforms of this character upon communities which were not prepared for them, and did not wish them to be imposed. That mistake had been made a few years ago in connection with the Bill of Lord Grosvenor, and was not likely to be repeated. He had for many years con-

tended for the principle of local option in this matter as against universal compulsion, because it gave the power of applying this reform to places which required it, and saved them from the danger of imposing it on places where it was not desired. He wished to define exactly what he meant by the term local option. He meant the right of each section of the community to determine this Sunday closing question or any other question according to its own wishes or the wishes of the public. As he had stated on a former occasion, the matter was mainly a question of areas, and he believed the smaller the areas which enjoyed local option the better, because the feeling of the people with whom they were dealing would be more certainly represented. He would willingly have accepted a smaller area than the county, because he conceived that one part of the county might wish this rule to be enforced, while other parts of the same county might have a different opinion, and he should have been very glad if local option could have been given to parishes."

The position we now take is identical with what we did in 1888. The Motion to keep Sunday closing in the Government Bill of 1888 failed to a great degree because it did not receive the support of gentlemen who were strongly in favour of universal compulsory Sunday closing. They said that was the only course to take. They beat local option by compulsory Sunday closing, and they said "let us wait until we get a Sunday-closing Bill." Later on a Sunday-closing Bill came on, and then the Member for Northampton (Mr. Labouchere) moved an Amendment to the Bill in favour of local option, as against Sunday closing, and he prevailed. The consequence was that the local option Sunday closing was beaten by universal Sunday closing, and then universal Sunday closing was beaten by local option, and that is exactly what may happen again. I voted for local option on the first occasion. I voted against the Amendment of my hon. Friend the Member for Northampton, because it defeated the Bill, not because I disapproved of the principle. I said in the course of the Debate that I should vote for the Bill, but if the Amendment were carried I should vote for that too. I have mentioned that, because I think it a salutary warning to the temperance party in this House. I fear, Sir, I have detained the House too long, but I was unwilling to leave any part of this great subject without such explanation as I could offer. I have endeavoured—I hope I have succeeded—in avoiding an exaggerated tone, or any provocative argument.

*Sir W. Harcourt*

I am not unaware of the great difficulties by which this question is surrounded and the opposition with which it is threatened. It will be encountered by a determined and well-organised resistance. That I am well aware of. That hon. Gentlemen opposite will take care of. I can only hope that the great body of the temperance reformers in this House, and outside of this House, without distinction of Party and without distinction of sections, will also make common cause, and that they will not allow extreme opinions or particularist views to distract their counsels so as to ensure defeat. I trust that they will sink, in this great matter, minor differences and combine with one heart and mind to carry into law a safe and a practical remedy for the direst evils with which the life-blood of the nation can be drained.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That leave be given to bring in a Bill to establish Local Control over the Traffic in Liquor."—(*The Chancellor of the Exchequer*).

\*Mr. H. COSMO BONSOR (Surrey, Wimbledon) said, he rose on this occasion after the remarkable speech of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and, after the extraordinary proposals which he had put forward, to speak on behalf of the trade to which he believed every hon. Gentleman in that House knew he had the honour to belong. He had been connected with the brewing trade for the last 25 years, and he wished at once to correct a misconception as to the position of the trade in that particular branch which he represented. It had never been the policy of the London trade to own public-house property. They were deeply interested in the pecuniary welfare of their customers, and on this occasion he spoke for the licence-holder rather than for the owner of licensed property. He might say at once that he rejoiced they were at last face to face with the proposals of Her Majesty's Government. It had been, for a considerable period, the habit of that House to deal with this question by means of private Members' Bills, abstract Resolutions, and other propositions on which hon. Gentlemen had voted, knowing perfectly well that their votes would have no effect in the country. As far as he could understand the proposals of the

right hon. Gentleman, they constituted an absolutely new departure in the system of licensing in this country. The right hon. Gentleman admitted, in his speech, that he did not propose to amend the law, that he did not intend to set up a new Licensing Authority in place of the present, or in any way to alter the existing control by that House over licensed property, but that he wished to set up a new machinery alike over that House and over the present Licensing Authority for the purpose of controlling the liquor traffic. The right hon. Gentleman wished, as he understood it, to set up an absolute *plébiscite* over the Houses of Parliament, the Licensing Authority, and over all those bodies which had had control from time to time, of public-house property. If the right hon. Gentleman had intended to bring in a Bill to deal with the question of intemperance—if he believed that to drink was attributable all the evils which he dwelt upon—he would have brought in a Bill to stop the manufacture of alcohol in this country and the importation of foreign liquors, and thus struck at the root of the whole matter. But the right hon. Gentleman struck at only one branch of the trade in liquor. He only attacked the licensed house, the publicans, the grocers, and other places which were controlled and regulated by the State. The houses which got their licences from the Excise were not included in this measure. The right hon. Gentleman merely included what he called “Justices’ licences,” which, in common English, were the houses of the poor. And in dealing with this question the right hon. Gentleman had made no attempt whatever to deal with clubs. Whilst the Chancellor of the Exchequer was speaking on the subject of Sunday closing in Ireland, Scotland, and Wales, he said that one-seventh of the trade of the publican had been cut off without any compensation, and he (Mr. Bonsor) interrupted him with a question; but he thought the right hon. Gentleman did not understand the reason why he interrupted him. He did it for the purpose of eliciting whether the Returns paid into the Exchequer on liquors had fallen off in the same proportion as the houses that had been closed, because it was a fact that so soon as licensed houses were closed illicit means of supplying drink sprung up. If they

were going to deal with the licensing question at all, it was absolutely necessary that they should deal with a certain class of clubs; and he ventured to think that the right hon. Gentleman had made a mistake in omitting them from his Bill. There were clubs at present in existence in the East of London—in fact, all over the Metropolis—which were absolutely uncontrolled by the State. They were called by various names. He would give an account of one in the East of London, which he believed was patronised by hon. Members of that House who sat for East London constituencies, and represented Radical opinions, probably everyone of whom would vote for the Second Reading of this Bill for the closing of licensed houses. The club to which he referred was conducted without any regulation at all as to hours, and his informant, a practical man, who visited it on a Sunday morning at 11 o’clock, when public-houses were closed, found there about 400 people, men, women, and children, and in three of the rooms gambling of various descriptions was going on, and in all the rooms drink was being consumed; and it was absolutely impossible to get even a biscuit, or any sort of solid refreshment. During the hour and a half his friend was in the club he was perfectly certain that two hogsheads of beer were drawn and consumed, besides an enormous quantity of spirits; and, besides this, a large quantity of spirits was carried out of the club to be consumed outside. If further legislation was going to be put on licensed houses—the houses regulated by the State—he was perfectly certain that this Bill would do more harm than good. He anticipated that if this Bill became law the gentlemen who were the members of these various clubs would be the first that would be called upon to vote for prohibition. They would not be under the law, they would not be closed themselves, but they would come out to prevent the competition of well-regulated and properly licensed traders. In listening to the speech of the right hon. Gentleman he felt that he had undertaken a difficult task. He wondered to himself whether the right hon. Gentleman really thought that this Bill was going to be an operative Bill, or whether he really thought it would ever pass into law, or whether it was only another

of those fulfilments of election pledges of which they had heard a great deal. He thought they had a right to demand of Her Majesty's Government two things. In the first place, they had a right to ask that after the Bill was introduced sufficient time would be given for the country and for the trade thoroughly to consider its provisions. In the second place, they had a right to ask—to demand—that if the Bill was introduced, affecting as it did enormous interests, it should be pressed, and that the decision of Parliament should be taken absolutely upon it. He thought the hon. Member for Bradford two or three years ago made a calculation as to what the capital was which was invested in licensed property. If his recollection served him right, the hon. Member named a sum of something like £200,000,000.

\*MR. CAINE (Bradford, E.) said he did not do anything of the kind. He estimated the amount as the sum that would be required to purchase under the Bill introduced by the Government of which the hon. Gentleman was a Member.

MR. COSMO BONSOR thought that was very much the same thing. The hon. Gentleman mentioned a value as to licensed houses of something like £5,000 apiece.

\*MR. CAINE said he merely called attention to what the value would be if the proposal of the late Government had been made law. He himself valued them at nothing.

MR. COSMO BONSOR said he would not argue the question. The hon. Member would agree with him that large sums of money had been invested in this trade. The hon. Member said he valued them at nothing. He presumed the hon. Member meant that they had made a bad investment.

MR. CAINE: Yes.

MR. COSMO BONSOR: They had made a bad investment. Well, he would ask the House under what conditions they had made that investment? In the first place, they had made it under the existing law; in the second place, under established custom; and, in the third place, on the statements of public men. As to what the right hon. Gentleman said about "*Sharp v. Wakefield*," they who were interested in licences were content to remain under the existing law. They

had never contended that there was not full discretion on the part of the Justices; but they had contended that the Justices were bound to state their judicial reasons for refusing the renewal or transfer of licences. "*Sharp v. Wakefield*" did not change the law; it only informed a great number of gentlemen who did not know the law what the law was. But within a year of the decision of "*Sharp v. Wakefield*," the Lord Chief Justice of England made some remarks upon the subject in a Judgment he delivered. He would remind the House that *Sharp's* house was situated on the moors of Westmoreland, that it had been absolutely closed for four months before the decision of the Justices was arrived at, and that every member of the trade who was consulted expressed a wish that the appeal should not be fought, because they considered the Justices' decision correct. Lord Chief Justice Coleridge said in May, 1890, after the decision in "*Sharp v. Wakefield*"—

"But I take the liberty to add this—that even on a question of fact, they (the Justices) must bring to the determination of it a clear judicial mind, and if that determination of fact is made under such circumstances that this Court can see that other matters than the pure matters before them have entered into their decision, then it is not a judicial decision, it is not an exercise of jurisdiction, and, *toties quoties*, this Court will interfere to compel justice to be done,"

or, in other words, that the licence should be renewed. Coming to the question of universal and established custom, he would remind the House that in every relation between the State and the trade the absolute right of renewal had been accepted and established. ["No."] An hon. Member said "No," but he would put it to him in this way. The Chancellor of the Exchequer when he made his annual Budget reckoned as an absolute certainty that the licences would be renewed, and estimated his income on that certainty. A licensed house was valued not by bricks and mortar, but as a going concern with its licence, and it was so valued for the purposes of Succession or Probate Duty. To give an example of this. A licensed victualler having given £18,000 for a public-house died within a year, and the Somerset House authorities immediately accepted the £18,000 as the value upon which the

Mr. H. Cosmo Bonsor

State should tax it for Succession and Probate Duties. That particular house without a licence was not worth £5,000. But this House had always recognised the existence and permanence of licences. In all the Acts it had passed it had always been considered that the permanence of a licence was established. He would mention another fact to show what the general opinion was out of doors. It was frequently the case that when new licences were applied for, the magistrates were consulted and shown the plans of the house. Was it to be conceived that any man in his senses would be so foolish as to submit the plan of a licensed house to the magistrate if he thought he was only to get one year's tenure of the licence? But these licences were recognised by every man of business, as was shown by the large amount of money lent on mortgage of licensed property outside the brewing and distilling industry. Even some of the great Insurance Companies had lent money on the premises, and on the faith of what they believed to be an established custom. Then there were the statements of public men. The Prime Minister had on several occasions spoken as to the permanence of licences and the vested interests of licence-holders. Speaking at Dalkeith, in November, 1879, the right hon. Gentleman said—

"But I must add, I think, if it be necessary, if Parliament should think it wise to introduce any radical change in the working of the liquor law in such a way as to break down the vain expectations of persons who have grown up—whether rightly or wrongly, it is not their fault—it is our fault—under the shadow of those laws, their fair claim to compensation ought, if they can make good their case, to be considered, as all such claims have been considered, by the wisdom and liberality of a British Parliament."

Again, speaking in this House on 5th March, 1880, the right hon. Gentleman said—

"As to compensation, the licensed victuallers ought to be dealt with exactly on the same principle as every other class in regard to which a vested interest has been permitted to grow up. When Parliament enacted Negro Emancipation it was preceded by a preliminary Resolution, in which the principle of compensation was recognised. My hon. Friend says that we must wait till a claim for compensation is made. Parliament does not act on that principle. Where the facts presented the possibility of such a claim, the recognition of the possibility has, I think, taken place in the original proceedings of Parliament."

Again, on the 18th June, 1880, the right hon. Gentleman said—

"I should have been better pleased with the matter of the Resolution if my hon. Friend had included in it some reference to the principle that we are not to deny to publicans, as a class, perfectly equal treatment, because we think that their trade is at so many points in contact with, and even sometimes productive of, great public mischief. Considering the legislative title they have acquired, and the recognition of their position in the proceedings of this House for a long series of years, they ought not to be placed at a disadvantage on account of the particular impression we may entertain—in many cases but too justly—in relation to the mischiefs connected with the present licensing system and the consumption of strong liquors."

The Chancellor of the Exchequer, on December 30th, 1872, at Oxford, spoke as follows:—

"There seems to be day by day a growing disposition more and more to invoke the interference of Government in relations of social life. I believe this to be a most dangerous tendency, and one to which it is necessary to offer an early and determined resistance. . . . I am against the whole system of petty molestation and irritating dictation, whether by a class or by a majority. I am against forbidding a man to have a glass of beer if he wants a glass of beer. I am against public-house restriction and park regulations."

Again, at Oxford, on December 22nd, 1874, he said—

"To extend a covert toleration to rash speculation and questionable schemes, in order to procure a precarious support, is not the way to recover confidence, but further to destroy it. We have going amongst us a doctrine of development promulgated by multifarious infallibilities. There is our old friend, Sir Wilfrid Lawson, the Pontiff of total abstinence, who, however much we may differ from him, it is impossible not to respect for his sincerity, and to admire for his humour, for in spite of his scruples he is always brimful of spirits. Well, he excommunicates all of us who are heretics because we do not embrace his immaculate dogma. For my part, I endure his anathemas with resignation. He is particularly wrath with me; he calls me a 'Protestant'—and so I am, and it is for this reason that I stick to the principle of private judgment, even in the matter of beer. . . . I cannot help thinking it is very hard on the Liberal Party to be held responsible before the country for all this farrago of crotchets. You cannot jumble up this mass of crude cries and present it to a rational nation and call it a policy, without revolting its common-sense and creating a reaction."

It was such matter as was contained in remarks of that sort that had induced men to buy public-house property in London and elsewhere, and the men who gave utterance to such observations were absolutely responsible for having induced men to enter into the business without giving them proper

warning of what was ultimately to take place. The Government were now going to throw these men over with a mere pittance of legislation. The Home Secretary and the Chief Secretary for Ireland had during the past few months been telling the country that the Government proposed to give exactly the same power to the people as the landowner at present held. That was a new article of faith for the Radical Party to hold up the landowner as a beneficent ruler. But the proposal was not at all analogous. He would ask hon. Members opposite whether they knew of a case where a landowner had turned out a publican without compensating him. There was not a single instance where a landowner had turned out a single publican unless he had been in possession of the house himself, or else the holder of the licence himself. There was no analogy between the principle the landowner exercised as a right over his property and the proposals which the Chancellor of the Exchequer had proposed that evening. The Government had proposed something in the form of compensation. It had been proposed that three years' notice should be given to the publican. He wondered when he heard the Chancellor of the Exchequer making that proposal whether he really and truly was speaking what he considered to be just. He thought when he mentioned three years he was thinking of the three years' goodwill, which was, at any rate, the common amount paid for the various businesses in the country. But though three years' goodwill was attached to the absolute value of a going concern as an ordinary term in the sale of businesses, three years in this particular trade was absolutely a fraud, an impossibility, and an impracticability in the shape of compensation. If they were going to give the man three years' notice his business would at once be taken away from him, and at the end of two years' his creditors would come upon him, and the publican would have great difficulty in getting that credit which was absolutely necessary for conducting any business whatever, while there would be a general scramble for those interests in the property for which he held the licence. There were also the ground rents, leases, and sub-leases over and over again giving one man a slightly increased rent over

the other, and how were those various interests to be settled? The three years system was an illusory argument, and he would say it was absolutely of no importance whatever to the trade for whom he had the honour of speaking. He feared that he had detained the House at some length, but in conclusion he would venture to remind the House that the trade to which he belonged had never been obstructionists to any State reform. In his speech the Chancellor of the Exchequer alluded to the Bill which Mr. Bruce introduced in 1871. That Bill quite startled the trade. But how was it met? Amendments were not put down to throw the Bill out. The trade met frequently and proposed Amendments to the Bill, which were submitted to the Government, and he had always insisted that if those Amendments had been favourably received by the Government of that day, and had been accepted as an alternative, there would have been made a final settlement of this question, and they would not that night have been discussing it. With regard to reforms, the trade had always adopted one line—namely, to do its utmost to promote reform so long as it was just and final. But the Chancellor of the Exchequer had admitted that there was no finality in the Bill. He spoke of further measures for electing Licensing Boards, and further measures of licensing reform. There was no finality about the measure, and he was bound to say, having heard it, that he thought it only right to say he believed that there was no alternative and no Amendments that were possible, and that the trade would have to meet it as it had never met licensing measures before—namely, by a direct negative. The trade never invited the contest, and never wished to bring the question before Parliament in its present form. The Government had, however, thrown down the challenge, and the trade accepted it, and looked forward with confidence to the result, because they believed that their interests and their property were safeguarded by justice, and that the proposals of the Government were harsh, impractical, and dishonest.

SIR W. LAWSON (Cockermouth) said, that the hon. Member who had just sat down had thrown down the gage of battle challenge which he cheerfully took up. Though he did not agree with

the gist of the hon. Gentleman's remarks, yet there was one sentence with which he cordially agreed. The hon. Gentleman said he rejoiced that they were now at length face to face with a Government measure on the question. They had looked for it for a long time, and that time had now come; and he thought that in bringing in the Bill the Government were only doing what the Prime Minister had promised they would do—namely, to carry out in power the measures they had approved of in Opposition. He thanked the Government for bringing in the Bill, and the Chancellor of the Exchequer for the admirable speech that he had made in introducing it. They had not often heard such a speech from the Treasury Bench, and he thought many Members never thought they would live to hear such a speech. He rejoiced that they had lived to hear it. The hon. Member (Mr. Cosmo Bonser) had talked of teetotalism, and he thought the hon. Member had alluded to the Bill as one in favour of total abstinence. But it was not a Teetotal Bill. How many teetotalers were there in the Government? He wished there were many more than there were. But the Government had not brought in the Bill as a Teetotal Bill to gratify teetotalers; they had brought it in in the interests of the citizens of the country. They had seen the House crowded when the Prime Minister brought in the Home Rule Bill, but there were quite as many people interested in this Bill as in the Home Rule Bill.

MR. T. W. RUSSELL (Tyrone, S.) :  
A great many more.

SIR W. LAWSON said, an hon. Friend near him said "A great many more." But he was a moderate man. This question had been longer before the country than even that of Home Rule. The Prime Minister at Chester last June said that the question had been in hand long enough, but the right hon. Gentleman had not gone quite far enough, for he ought to have said that it had been in hand too long. What was it they demanded? Simply that the liquor shops should not be forced into districts and neighbourhoods where the people did not want them—that and nothing more. The Magistrates had the local veto now, and they exercised it for their own benefit. ["No, no!"] Hon. Gentlemen

opposite said, "No, no!" but he would ask them to get up and give an instance in which a Magistrate had ever voted for a licence to a house next door to where he lived himself. No more "No, no's" after that. All that they asked for was that the working man, whose home, whose comfort, and whose family were as dear to him as to the home and family of any Magistrate, should be allowed the same power as any Magistrate. That was the whole thing. Why had this demand arisen, and why was there so strong a case for it? Because everybody who looked at the question knew that all the good people who spent their lives, time, and money in endeavouring to lift the working classes, found that the one great obstacle to them was the licensed drink shop. Many hon. Members remembered Mr. Dowse, afterwards a Judge, who was no gloomy fanatic, but one of the most genial and cleverest men ever seen in that House, and who in Ireland said the measure of the degradation of any district was in exact proportion to the amount of alcohol which was consumed in it. General Booth—[*Opposition laughter*]—he knew some one would laugh; hon. Gentlemen always laughed at anybody who tried to do good. Although they might not agree with his methods, General Booth was a man who knew the habits and manners of the people of this country. Two years ago General Booth wrote a book, in which he said that nine-tenths of the misery, crime, and squalor which he spent his time in trying to remove was caused by drink. He could do nothing with these people until he carried them away to "colonies" where there were no drink shops. He therefore took the men away from the drink, but this Bill took the drink away from the men, or, rather, it proposed to let the men take it away themselves. The House must agree that the Chancellor of the Exchequer was not premature in bringing in the Bill. Since 1880 three times a Resolution had been passed in that House declaring each time by an increased majority that the people of this country ought to have the right of protecting themselves from the incursions of the liquor trade wherever they wished to do so, and in 1883 Parliament declared that the demand was urgent. He was glad that at last they had a Govern-



ment which recognised the urgency, and he hoped they had a Parliament that would support the Government.

MR. JOHNSTON (Belfast, E.) : Except as regards Ireland.

SIR W. LAWSON : I am speaking about the Bill.

MR. JOHNSTON : So am I.

SIR W. LAWSON said, he would try to abstain from a fault that was too common in that House, that of making a Second or Third Reading speech on a First Reading, but he would say as to the three years' limit that he was for doing the thing promptly. But he did not think they need trouble about that, as the hon. Member (Mr. Cosmo Bonsor) said, as he understood, that the trade did not care about the limit—he wanted to be put out of his misery at once. If that was the view that the trade took, he was quite sure that Parliament would not keep the hon. Member in his misery any longer. Then as to the exemptions. In Committee they could have a friendly discussion about those. But he rejoiced heartily that there was no compensation in the Bill. He thought the hon. Member opposite who talked so much about it was rather mistaken if he thought he could carry the people of this country with him on a proposal of that sort. One Government tried it twice, and it did not live long enough to try it thrice, and he did not think any Government would be so foolish as to get into such a hornet's nest again. He regretted, with the hon. Member for East Belfast, that Ireland was not included in the Bill ; but that would give another grievance to the Irish Members to redress. In a First Reading Debate they had only to discuss the principle of a Bill. The principle of this Bill was that the people of every locality ought to have the power to protect themselves against the drink-shops if they thought it right to do so. Surely both Parties might agree on a measure of such a character. He could not understand how any Liberal could possibly object to it, for it was simply an extension of local self-government, and local self-government was the great question of the day. They had Education Boards, Bath-House Boards, and Burial Boards. The people might teach themselves, they might wash themselves, and they might bury themselves ;

*Sir W. Lawson*

but when it came to making themselves drunk that was to be left in the hands of the Magistrates. And Conservatives might support the Bill, for surely there was nothing more worthy to conserve than the order and comfort and morality of the people. He regretted very much that total Sunday closing had not been secured by this Bill, and that England was not to be placed in the same position as Scotland, Ireland, and Wales. But it should be remembered that Ireland got it because a large number of Irish Members had been in favour of it ; and that Scotland and Wales got it for the same reason ; but he was afraid if the English Members of the House were polled, a majority would be found against this reform. He had always supported Sunday closing. But he would stop the sale of drink on every day, because he agreed with the noble Lord the Member for South Paddington (Lord Randolph Churchill), who had declared that the sale of drink was "devilish and destructive," and to carry it on on a week-day was pretty nearly as bad as carrying it on on Sunday. The Chancellor of the Exchequer trusted the people and gave them power by a bare majority to carry Sunday closing. He could not believe that any advocate of total Sunday closing, because he could not get a whole loaf now, would do anything to injure the Bill. He had no doubt an attempt would be made to belittle the Bill by saying that the people would not use the power it gave them because they were too much sodden with drink. [*Opposition cries of "No, no !"*] He was glad to hear that, because the late Dr. Guthrie said that if Parliament would leave the matter of the sale of drink to the people themselves they would by an all but unanimous vote shut up every drink shop in their neighbourhood. More than a generation had passed since these words were uttered, but still, they found that the upper classes, for the sake of benefit, had been forcing these drink shops on the lower classes. [*Opposition cries of "No !"*] Who licensed these places ? Had the working men anything to do with it ? He was glad that the Chancellor of the Exchequer had limited this measure to a veto Bill, and had not made it a Licensing Bill. If he had touched licensing he would have got into a most terrible mess, for the name of licensing reformers was

legion. He believed that he was the only man in the country who had not got a licensing scheme. Some said licensing should be entrusted to Magistrates; others said it should be in the hands of County Councils; others favoured Boards *ad hoc*; and a new school, which was known as the Scandinavian school, had recently sprung up, and he was looking forward with interest to the Debate in the other House upon this particular scheme. But to all these people he said—"However excellent, and ingenious, and elaborate your plan, don't try the experiment in those places where the people wish to be without drink-shops." He was glad, therefore, that the Chancellor of the Exchequer had let all these things alone. As to prohibition, they knew it had succeeded everywhere where it had been tried. [*Cries of "Oh!"*] No one denied it; it had never been contradicted. [*Renewed cries of "Oh!"*] Ah, yes, he knew that hon. Members opposite would deny it; but he challenged hon. Members to mention a district in which prohibition had been properly carried out in which it had not been a great and brilliant success. [*Cries of "Where!"*] In Canada and America—everywhere it had been tried; but they need not go abroad for instances. Hon. Gentlemen opposite did not know their own case. Had they ever read the Report of the Convocation of the Diocese of Canterbury? Surely they ought to know that as good Churchmen. It was stated in that Report that there were hundreds of parishes in England in which there were no public-houses, and in which in consequence the order and sobriety of the people was all that could be desired. He had only got to say that, in his humble opinion, this was the greatest measure that had been introduced into Parliament since the attack upon slavery. He thanked the Government from his heart for their honest, straightforward attempt to deal with this evil; and he was sure that in a short time there would be out of doors such a volume of support for it as would succeed in carrying it, as a great, good, just, and beneficent measure, to a triumphant and successful issue.

MR. WYNDHAM (Dover) said that, in his opinion, the most significant passage in the speech of the hon. Baronet was that in which he said that in England

Sunday closing should not be applied to the whole country, because the whole country was not in favour of it.

SIR W. LAWSON: I said that the number of Members returned for England in favour of it would not be in a majority.

MR. WYNDHAM said he thanked the hon. Baronet for the correction. The hon. Baronet had, no doubt, put the matter more correctly, and had told them that universal Sunday closing was not advisable at that moment, because in that House there was not a majority of English Members in favour of it.

SIR W. LAWSON: I did not intend to say that it was unadvisable. I merely brought forward one or two facts to show how difficult it would be for the Government to do so.

MR. WYNDHAM said, he would not quarrel with the hon. Baronet about the word, and would substitute inexpedient for unjustifiable, if that would suit him better. At any rate, what he did say was, that there was a majority of English Members against Sunday closing. He would ask, was there a majority of English Members in favour of the direct veto? Not only was there not such a majority, but he believed that the majority of English opinion was against any scheme of the kind, and that this opinion was distributed in favour of those other schemes which the hon. Baronet only referred to to flout and treat with contempt. They had, however, in the proposals which the Government had made the last, and if not the gravest, the most flagrant outcome of that legislative system which was so justly and vigorously condemned by the noble Lord the Member for South Paddington as a system of legislative log-rolling by which the voice of England was not to be heard in the House, and by which the voice of English Members was to be ignored upon all questions affecting England brought before the House. English Members took as deep an interest in English affairs as Irish Members and Scotch Members did in their own affairs; but the English voice was to be swamped upon this matter by Scotch and Irish Members, although the Bill did not apply to either

of those countries. They were told that they must accept Home Rule, which profoundly affected the Constitution and that House, because a majority of Irish Members were in favour of it. Then they were told that they must accept Welsh Disestablishment because a majority of Welsh Members were in favour of it. Now they were asked to accept a scheme profoundly altering the social conditions of the country, and although English Members viewed the scheme with suspicion for one cause or another, doubted it as a remedy, and looked upon it as unjust to a certain class of the population, they were to be swamped by votes from Scotland, Ireland, and Wales. The political organ—he believed that that was the correct expression—disbelieved entirely in the nostrum as a cure for the evil from which the country undoubtedly suffered. He held it to be the duty of the Government not to bring forward measures which simply expressed the sum of organised votes in the country, but measures only which they believed rested upon the convictions of the majority of the inhabitants; and he was convinced that this measure, crude, unjust, tyrannical, and inexpedient, as it was, would not commend itself to the judgment of the majority of Englishmen. The measure was tyrannical to minorities. They had heard from the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whose eloquent language in reference to the drink question he cordially endorsed, that a local veto was to be applied in limited areas by a majority of two-thirds of those who voted. That was a tyrannical exercise of power by the majority in any district. It was a measure which did not always command the assent of the Chancellor of the Exchequer or the assent of his Colleagues on the Treasury Bench, because it differed entirely from the scheme brought forward by the noble Lord, the Member for Paddington. The Chancellor of the Exchequer made a long quotation from a speech by the noble Lord, and left it to be inferred that his measure practically embodied the same principles.

SIR W. HARCOURT: That is so. If the hon. Member will look at the Bill he will find the local veto clauses and the noble Lord's are almost identical.

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MR. WYNDHAM said, they might be almost identical, but he thought the clauses in the present Bill would be found to differ from those of the Member for Paddington. The noble Lord provided that two-thirds of the electors on the municipal register were to vote. It made all the difference in the world whether the majority was to be two-thirds of the ratepayers or two-thirds of those who might happen to go to the poll at a season of the year when everybody might be away, or under a sudden and exceptional agitation. When he drew that distinction, he drew a distinction which had engaged the mind and received the assent of some of the present advisers of Her Majesty. Two years ago, when the Local Veto Bill for Wales was introduced, the present occupants of the Treasury Bench accepted what they called the "bare principle" of that measure. But how did they deal with the question of the proportion of the population which was to be allowed to tyrannise over the minority? The present Chief Secretary for Ireland said that—

"It would not be at all fruitful or safe to force prohibition with less than the support of two-thirds or three-fourths of the total number of persons entitled to vote."

Now, why were English Members in that House, against their judgment, to be asked to accept a measure which, by implication, one of the Cabinet Ministers denounced as barren and dangerous to the community? It certainly must have been the opinion of the Chief Secretary for Ireland that a vote of this character with a less popular assent than two-thirds or three-fourths of the whole of the inhabitants of the locality would be useless in the direction of temperance reform and dangerous to the liberty of the Queen's subjects. That was the proposal they were now asked to accept. He would pass from the tyranny this measure would involve on minorities to the injustice towards a section of the community who had carried on a difficult trade in a manner which had won some eulogy even from those who now brought forward this measure. If this Bill was unjust towards the licence-holders of this country, they might depend upon it they

should not now see the efforts of temperance reformers crowned with success ; for if there was any cause which it was easy to plead on any platform, it was the cause of justice. It was sufficient that an orator, no matter how mean his abilities, should be able to point to one man, or woman, or child who was personally known to his audience, and to show that he or she had been hardly treated in order to secure the whole sympathy of those whom he addressed. It was a commonplace to those who reviewed history that strong Governments had fallen because one man had been killed or because another had been robbed of his livelihood. Those were incidents which appealed to the popular imagination, and yet they were bringing in a Bill which might involve, and which must involve in some cases, the greatest hardship and the greatest injustice upon men who had, according to their lights, been endeavouring to serve the community in what the majority of people in this country believed to be a perfectly lawful profession. He thought another very grave objection to the Bill was that it did not provide any system of compensation. It was idle to talk of this time limit as in the nature of compensation, and any reference to Mr. Bruce's Bill of 1871 seemed to him to obscure the issue altogether. A time limit applied to such a measure as Lord Aberdare's, or to any measure which authorised a Local Body to state that at some period the number of public-houses must be reduced within certain limits was compensation, because it allowed the trade to compensate itself. It practically said here are 10 houses, and so many houses must be closed within five years, and it left these 10 men to come together and come to some arrangement under which the five best qualified to carry on the business should continue to do so, and the five less qualified should be compensated by the survivors. But when they contemplated the sweeping extinction of the trade within areas, such a possibility of compensation did not come in at all. The Bill said that there might be five licence-holders, three of whom might be men of substance, who had always observed the law and endeavoured to do their duty, and that these three were to lose everything they had in the world and share the same fate as the

other men, who might be men of no substance, who had neglected their duties and endeavoured to evade the law. They maintained that that position was an inherent injustice, and no English Government would be able to support and defend it in the face of the English people. Then he came to his third objection to the Bill, and that was that it was inexpedient in the interests of temperance reform itself. When he spoke of justice, it might be that there were some so wedded to this particular fad that they were ready to forget justice; when he spoke of tyranny, it might be that they would even forget liberty to support their croquet; but when he came to speak of the interests of temperance reform, perhaps they might bear with him and listen to him for a moment. Now, it was undoubtedly true, as had been said by Sir Wilfrid Lawson, that there were a number of schemes before the public. That showed that the question of temperance reform engaged the minds and time of a great number of Englishmen, who were willing and anxious to benefit their countrymen in this matter. But what would be done if this Local Veto Bill were passed? Why, they would threaten the plank of every other movement for temperance reform—the true path of reform which the majority of English Members and Englishmen desired to see followed, by aiming at the reduction in the number of public-houses, and at the amelioration and elevation of the character and condition of those houses. He could understand the hon. Baronet (Sir W. Lawson) talking about liquor shops and drawing comparisons between England and Africa because he believed that all liquor was bad, but no one who did not hold that view was justified in supporting the Bill, for the true path of reform lay in the direction of abolishing the smaller and more disreputable public-houses, and of building up the other houses, and making them places of reputable resort, where the working classes might enjoy that social recreation which they who sat in that House could have without resorting to the public-house. If that be the true path of reform, then he said that no measure more ill-advised than the one now recommended to the House could possibly have commended itself to Her Majesty's Government. It

would paralyse every effort to that improvement on the part of the publican ; it would discourage every effort of reform on the part of true reformers, and he asked the House why they were now to take this measure, not in deference to English opinion, not from any consideration of the merits of the case, but solely because it had been forced upon the Government by the exigencies of their political situation which constrained them to secure every organised vote in the country in order to add yet another contingent to the motley forces by which they hoped to pass a constitutional revolution, repugnant to every patriotic Englishman ?

\*MR. CAINE (Bradford, E.) said, it was not his intention to follow the previous speaker through a speech which would have been more appropriate on the Second Reading of the Bill than on this inaugural stage. As far as he was able to judge without having a copy of the Bill before him, it was a measure for which the Temperance Party throughout the country ought to be distinctly grateful to the Government. He admitted it was not all that many of them desired, but that it was a large, a valuable, and important instalment of those various temperance reforms for which many of them had been agitating so long could not be denied, and he thanked the Chancellor of the Exchequer for the sympathetic speech with which he had introduced the Bill, and for the services which he had rendered both in and out of the House to a question which he hoped was approaching a somewhat final settlement. He would like to say what the attitude of the more advanced section of temperance reformers was likely to be on the Bill. With regard to the first portion, that of the direct veto, they accepted that most gladly, and for his part he was glad that the Government had resisted the temptation to introduce into it a somewhat crude concession of a large and elaborate scheme of licence reform. That some such scheme would inevitably follow the one now before the House was certain ; but all that this Bill proposed to do was to give the people themselves the right to prevent any

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Licensing Authority, however it might be constituted, having the power to thrust upon an unwilling community liquor-shops which they believe to be to their detriment ; and so the Temperance Party throughout the country would gladly welcome this honest proposal to deal with such an important aspect of temperance reform. The hon. Member for Dover had said that this Bill had been brought forward in response to the exigencies of Party. If the hon. Member had watched the process of returning the present House of Commons closely, he would have known there was no more burning question before the country—with the exception of the Irish Question—nor one which so agitated public opinion or awakened the interests of all sections of electors. This measure had been brought forward in response to the demands of the country. So far as the first portion of the Bill was concerned the Government, he thought, need not expect opposition from the Temperance Party, and any Amendments which might be moved in Committee would be friendly Amendments, brought forward with the object of making the Bill a little stronger. The details of the Bill that would require close scrutiny were those respecting hotels, eating-houses, &c., because experience had shown that these exceptions were very apt to be abused, and the free lunch system existing in some States of America, where the laws had been severe with regard to public-houses, had shown how easy it was to evade the law where exceptions were made. That some such exceptions should be made they were quite prepared to admit. The question, perhaps, more than anything else which would raise discussion would be the question of compensation. The deliberate proposal of the late Government to confer upon the liquor trade a freehold interest in a licence granted for 12 months, and compensation for disturbance—24½ years' purchase being given for the difference in the annual value, with or without the licence—had had such an effect on public opinion that that freehold proposal had entirely disappeared, and no Government would venture on anything more than three years' law. If hon. Gentlemen opposite raised the question of compensation, they would raise a

turmoil which would convince them that the country had no intention of paying money compensation for the loss of a 12 months' licence. He trusted the Government would not proceed, in the least degree, in the direction of a money or other compensation. There was no doubt whatever that the proposals of the Government with regard to Sunday closing were those which would create the most stir in the ranks of the temperance reformers throughout the country. The right hon. Gentleman himself admitted that the heart of the Temperance Party was very strongly set upon universal Sunday closing. Not only was the heart of the Temperance Party set on this, but other forces of the country were agitating for Sunday closing just as strongly. That great Body, the Wesleyan Methodists, had made this question almost part and parcel of their religion, and they were insisting upon this with a vigour and persistency that would certainly make itself heard in this House during the Committee stage of the Bill. This Sunday closing question had already become an important labour question. Strong evidence was given before the Labour Commission of the employment of persons on a Sunday in these licensed establishments, and an effort would be made—apart altogether from the temperance reformers or the Religious Bodies—to secure for the over-worked servants of publicans a day of rest after the long hours they were employed during the week. The Chancellor of the Exchequer spoke words of sense and truth when he said there was no greater danger than that of over-running the sentiment of the people. He entirely agreed with that; there could be no greater folly than to legislate in advance of public opinion on this or any other subject. This question of Sunday closing came to the front very closely at the last General Election, and many pledges had been given by hon. Members on the subject. The House of Commons had been returned by household suffrage and was not yet 12 months old, so that surely the vote of that House on this question might be accepted as final and satisfactory evidence of the state of public opinion on the question. He trusted the Government would not put obstacles in the way of a friendly Division

being taken on this important question of Sunday closing; and if they would accept the decision of the House, whatever it might be, he, for his part, would frankly accept the decision if it was against him, and fall into line and accept what the Government might propose. He should vote gladly for the First Reading of the Bill; he should vote for the Second Reading; he should endeavour to amend the Bill in Committee; and if he failed to improve it then, he would take the best he could get.

\*MR. TRITTON (Lambeth, Norwood), who claimed the indulgence which the House always extended to a Member who addressed it for the first time, said his position was a somewhat unique one. He believed he was the only Conservative Member for the Metropolis who was altogether repudiated by the Licensed Victuallers' Association; and, on the other side, he presumed he was the only teetotal Member of that House who was entirely repudiated by the extreme Gladstonian, Separatist teetotal faction. In neither case was the advice given by the leaders of these two Parties carried out by their followers. The licensed victuallers repudiated him; but when the publicans throughout the constituency he had the honour to represent came to look into the statement of his opponent and himself, they found themselves in the position of being between a certain unmentionable personage and the deep blue sea, and they preferred the moderation of the cerulean ocean to the plundering proclivities of the unmentionable personage. In the constituency he represented there were a great many sensible constituents; and, in spite of the repudiation of the two Bodies he had mentioned, they did him the honour to return him (Mr. Tritton) to that House by the substantial majority of 1,563. He had taken the greatest possible interest in temperance reform for many years; and he feared there were temperance reformers on the other side of the House who would celebrate the passage of that Bill, if carried, not in a way that they teetotalers liked. What had made the Government bring in this strong measure? It had been already stated by the Mem-

ber for Dover that this Bill had been brought in for similar reasons that other Bills were brought in, and he entirely believed him. He believed, as the Member for Paddington said the other night, it was the old story of "Votes! votes! votes!" There was a book he had recently come across which he was sure would be eagerly bought and read by every hon. Member of that House. It was called *Wisdom, Grave and Gay; being Selected Speeches of Sir Wilfrid Lawson on Social Reform*. He would ask the indulgence of the House while he read a passage from this wonderful work. The hon. Baronet, on the 11th October, 1887, made a speech on the attitude of political leaders—

"Then look," he said, at the rival political leaders. Is it not grand to hear Mr. Morley get up and say, 'We cannot have any temperance legislation because of you wicked Unionists'? And then Mr. Chamberlain saying, 'I am pining for temperance legislation, but I cannot get forward because of you abominable Home Rulers.' And Lord Salisbury, when we come to him and ask him to receive a deputation to discuss the matter, says he cannot attend to us, he has so many engagements. Well, perhaps his engagements will be less by-and-bye." [Laughter.] He (Mr. Tritton) should like to tell hon. Members that "laughter," "loud cheers," "hear, hear," and other expressions of approval were largely dotted throughout this marvellous book. The hon. Baronet then went on, in the speech in question, to say—

"And then we have the Leader of the Opposition himself. Well, he gives dark sayings, and intimates that if we will only back him up on the Irish Question, we shall see what we shall see when he comes back to power."

This Bill was framed on the lines of the United Kingdom Alliance, the object of which, according to Sir W. Lawson, was "to sweep away the liquor traffic in the whole of the United Kingdom." Now, he should like to know what hon. Members on the Ministerial side of the House connected with the trade thought of the allies of the Government. He should like to know how the hon. Member for Bedford (Mr. S. Whitbread), or for the Luton Division of Bedford, or other gentlemen opposite engaged in the brewing trade, liked the alliance of the Government with the United Kingdom Alliance. For his own part, he had never been an admirer of the Alliance,

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and he very much questioned if the Alliance admired him. He believed the hon. Member for Cumberland (Sir W. Lawson) and the hon. Member for East Bradford (Mr. Caine) had so got their ideas warped on this direct veto scheme that they would rather see a habitual drunkard walk up the floor of that House, with besotted face and staggering gait, if he promised to vote for direct veto than see a man like himself, who had for years been working in the temperance cause, but would not vote for direct veto because he did not like it. Mr. John Bright, in a speech he delivered in 1864, said—

"It will be seen that my hon. Friend proposes a Bill which affects some scores of thousands of persons and some millions of property, the measure which he proposes being entirely different, I think, from anything which has ever been proposed or sanctioned by the House with regard to any other description of property or any other interest. What is meant by the representative system is not that you should have the vote of thousands of persons taken upon a particular question of legislation, but that you should have men selected from those thousands having the confidence of the majority of the thousands, and that they should meet and should discuss questions for legislation, and should decide what measures should be enacted; and, therefore, in this particular question I should object altogether to disposing of the interest of a great many men, and of a great many families, and of a great amount of property. I should object altogether to allow such a matter to be decided by the vote of two-thirds of the ratepayers of any parish or town. As a Member of this House, representing a very large constituency, and having my sympathies entirely with those who are endeavouring to promote temperance amongst the people, and, after much consideration on this subject, I have never yet seen my way at all to give a vote which would tend to pass a measure such as that now proposed to the House."

As to Sunday closing by a bare majority, he said that he was in favour of Sunday closing, both in the interests of the publican and his hardworked servants, and also in the interests of the temperance question. He did not see why men and women should be made to work seven days in the week. But he believed that the Government was taking a retrograde step on the question of Sunday closing. It would be better to bring in a measure of Imperial Sunday closing. He should like to see some facilities afforded by granting two hours on Sunday, one in the middle of the day and one in the evening, in order that working

men, who had no cellars of their own, should obtain something to drink for their dinners or suppers. He thought public-houses should be opened for one hour in the middle of the day and one hour in the evening. It was highly desirable that some experiment should be made on a smaller scale than that proposed in the Bill, and he would suggest that direct veto should be tried by the Party opposite at their great rendezvous, the National Liberal Club; and when the next great gathering of the Party took place there to do homage to the Cabinet, let it be understood that no intoxicants were to be had, except a small bottle of brandy kept at hand lest any of the ladies should faint, as they did on a previous occasion. If they were going to shut up public-houses on Sundays they would be making one law for the rich and another for the poor, and that was a species of legislation which he, as an earnest teetotaler, would have nothing to do with. Then he came to the question of compensation. He had yet to learn that teetotalers were to lay aside common principles of justice when they came to deal with a question like this, or to abrogate that time-honoured maxim, "Do unto others as ye would they should do unto you." He was glad to find amongst the latest recruits on the compensation question the hon. Member for Northampton; for he presumed that when they read the weekly periodical which came out under the hon. Member's auspices, and saw the great "I" running all through it—so different from the "We" of other newspapers—they were justified in believing that the words expressed the splendid thoughts that had been worked out in the marvellous workshop of that gigantic intellect which was the happy possession of the hon. Member for Northampton. The hon. Member wrote—

"I confess that I have some sympathy with the publican in his trade, who in many cases is a very respectable man, pursuing a calling in the profits of which the State has long been his partner. I do not think, therefore, in his case it would be wrong to temper justice with mercy. He might be secured his lease five years; and if at any time during those five years he were prohibited by the votes of his neighbours from continuing his trade, he might receive compensation for the unexpired portion of the five years."

He had strong objections to this Bill, and he was extremely sorry to have to separate himself in any way from some teetotalers in the House for whom he had strong respect and regard. He had never belonged to what was called the Temperance Party, and he did not know why they should arrogate to themselves such a title. There were many earnest abstainers throughout the country who viewed with apprehension this Direct Veto Scheme. This Bill seemed to him to be, after all, more or less a miserable Bill. He would ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer two questions: First, whether he expected that his Revenue would be very seriously diminished by this Bill during the next few years if he remained in Office; and, secondly, whether, as a thorough-going man of the world, blessed with more than ordinary common-sense, he really in his inmost heart believed the Bill was going to do such a vast amount of good? He believed himself that it would be more or less of a dead letter, and that it would be very mischievous in its tendency. He was very sorry to hear the author of the Bill say the areas were going to be parishes; he had hoped the areas were going to be electoral districts. It was a sad thing to think the question was to be fought out in the parishes, for it would divide them into two hostile camps, and would be decidedly detrimental to the interests of true religion. He believed, also, that this was a misconceived Bill altogether. It was not conceived on the principles of justice, but on the principles of confiscation and tyranny, and he believed there was no greater tyrant on the earth than the modern Radical. He wanted to see a Licensing Bill brought in to reduce the number of public-houses in accordance with the number of the population. That, he believed, would do some good, which was more than the Government Bill would do, and because he believed it would be virtually a dead letter if it ever passed he had spoken so strongly against it. He might, perhaps, be drummed out of the Temperance Party for making this speech, but he should continue, by personal example as well as by precept, to try to check the stream of in-



temperance, and to lessen the sin and the sorrow, the pain and the poverty, the degradation and disease and death brought about so largely by over-indulgence in strong drink.

MR. THOMAS SNAPE (Lancashire, S.E., Heywood) said, the country would receive the proposal of the Government with satisfaction, but he believed that satisfaction would be greater still if the country was not confronted with the Sunday closing proposals of the Bill. There had been no request that that portion of the subject should be dealt with by local option. Petitions and Memorials to Parliament asked that it should be dealt with by Imperial enactment. A resolution was adopted by the Temperance Party which met in London last week which declared that there had been no demand for Sunday closing by local option, and that to put the week-day sale and Sunday closing on that basis would be to weaken both issues. The present Chancellor of the Exchequer (Sir W. Harcourt), in 1888, accepted a Sunday Closing Bill as a measure worthy of his support. He did not then urge any reasons against Imperial legislation. Surely that which he claimed to be practicable in 1888 was not impracticable now. They had passed Sunday Closing Bills for Scotland, Wales, and Ireland. A few large towns in Ireland were exempted, but experience was showing that these towns were desirous of being included. If they passed an English Bill, leaving out London, it would not be long until London would desire to be included in the operation of the scheme. Needless expense would be entailed by the Sunday Closing Clauses on those desirous of applying the measure. There would also be interminable agitation and continuous appeals every three years to the communities. If he rightly apprehended the Bill, there would be a separate appeal as to the week-day sale, and another appeal with reference to the Sunday sale. There would be a continual series of appeals, and the communities would be in a perpetual state of unrest. Moreover, if those appeals were taken together, the probability was that the voters would be so con-

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fused when recording their opinion on the matter that they would not know whether they were voting for the direct veto in its application to week days or in its application to Sunday. The difficulty would be extreme, and the publicans, believing their trade in danger, would exercise all the influence they possessed—which was by no means small, as the country had learned only recently—to thwart a correct expression of opinion on the part of the people. There was also the difficulty which had been encountered in Wales and which would be encountered in a greater degree in this country if this system of local option were established. In regard to the Welsh Act for Sunday closing the Royal Commission which had investigated it in their Report had pointed out that in one town there was a street with five public-houses on one side of it and three on the other; and because one side happened to be in Wales and the other in England, one set of public-houses were closed on Sunday and the other set opened. "Such anomalies as this are rare," said the Report, "but while they do exist it cannot be denied that the existing law is capable of improvement." But under the present Bill the anomalies would not be rare—they would exist in many parishes throughout the country. In the large city in which he resided the application of this measure would be involved in great difficulty. There were a large number of wards in the city, and the probability was that one ward would adopt local option whilst an adjoining one would not. The result would be that on one side of the street the public-houses would be shut, whilst on the other side they remained open. So long as they had found Imperial legislation to work well in Scotland and Ireland, he trusted that the Government would accede to the views of their supporters, the majority of whom were in favour of an Imperial enactment as regarded that part of the Bill which referred to Sunday closing.

\*MR. T. W. RUSSELL (Tyrone, S.) said, he intended to support the Second Reading, therefore he was not going to attempt to "talk out" the present stage. He wished to state to the House that

his difficulties as to the Bill were not connected with what it did, but what it left undone. The Chancellor of the Exchequer stated that the object of the Bill was to establish popular control over the liquor traffic by the direct veto. In his (Mr. T. W. Russell's) opinion it did nothing of the kind. The Bill simply gave any locality the option of leaving things as they were now, or prohibiting the liquor traffic altogether. That was not giving localities the control of the liquor traffic, because if there was no liquor traffic to control how could there be local control? They had all been making confessions to-night. Well, he himself had been a temperance advocate for 30 years, and his deliberate opinion was that the Bill gave an option that would be availed of in hardly any part of England, while it withheld an option—namely, that of restriction—which would have been extensively used all over England. That, he maintained, was a serious blot in the Bill. The hon. Baronet the Member for Cumberland (Sir W. Lawson) asked where prohibition had ever been known to fail. He had asked that question long enough himself, but he had just returned from Canada, where he had made very careful inquiries into the working of an Act exactly similar to this in the Province of Ontario. The Scott Act, passed in 1878 by the Dominion Legislature, gave the same power and no more—the right to prohibit or leave things alone. It was put into operation in 80 counties, and there was not at this moment, after a three years' trial, a square inch in the Province under the Act. Because he believed prohibition would not be extensively applied, and where applied it would be in places where it was least needed, he did not want a similar measure to the Scott Act in this country. He wanted something in addition to that. He wanted a local control of the liquor traffic. The right hon. Gentleman maintained that the Bill gave that, but he (Mr. T. W. Russell) maintained it did not. The next point he wished to deal with was as to Sunday closing. He wished to point this out seriously to the right hon. Gentleman, because he had had some experience of Sunday closing in

Ireland with exemptions. He thought it was an hon. Member opposite who said that in regard to Sunday closing the Bill was a retrograde measure. He agreed with that. He believed that there was not an hon. Member on the Ministerial side of the House who was pledged to Sunday closing who was at the same time pledged to Sunday closing by direct veto. It was a 100 to 1 that if any hon. Member had offered that it would have been scouted by the Temperance Party of England. The right hon. Gentleman proposed by a simple majority in every parish in England to stop the traffic in intoxicating liquor in this country during the whole of Sunday, and he took the area of the parish. He approved the area of the parish for prohibition or restriction on week-days, but not on Sundays. People were idle on Sundays; and if they found the public-houses closed in one parish on the Sundays would walk to another, and, having plenty of time on their hands, would stay to drink, and come back to their own parish drunk. Week-day prohibition was another thing. On week-days the men were not idle, and they could not afford the time to walk from their own parish into another parish. He agreed to the area in regard to prohibition on week-days, but held that, so far as Sunday was concerned, they would probably make things worse than they were now. That, therefore, was a serious objection to the Bill. He asked the attention of the hon. Baronet the Member for Cumberland to this. He (Mr. T. W. Russell) remembered his crusade—and it was 28 years ago since the hon. Baronet first rose in the House to move the Second Reading of the Permissive Bill. He was thankful for the conversion of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, because he remembered when the right hon. Gentleman described this as "grandmotherly legislation." The right hon. Gentleman had had no term too strong to hurl at those who had been engaged in the work of temperance reform. He was glad the right hon. Gentleman's conversion, but there were things in the Bill which would require careful note. For example, take the question of the exemption of railway refreshment rooms. Did hon. Members know what took place at railway stations now during prohibited hours? Did they know that people took 1d. and 2d. tickets and crowded into

those stations in thousands who were not going to travel at all? This was his experience in Dublin. Take the question of eating-houses. Were they going to have a definition of eating-houses in the Bill? If not, how were they to guard against licensed victuallers taking houses that were nominally eating-houses, but really drinking-houses? A complaint had been made that Ireland had been left out of the Bill. He was sorry it had been left out because he agreed that this right to prohibit ought to be the complement of every other measure; but now they had got it in place of everything else, and that was his objection to it. He was with the right hon. Gentleman in proposing to give the veto to the locality, but that ought to be the complement of every other Bill on the subject that was introduced into that House. There was no other Veto Bill before the House that did not give the option to prohibit, and the option to restrict, and the option to stop the granting of new licences. Why had the right hon. Gentleman given the one and refused both the others? He was sure that the trade need not be very much alarmed, because it was not going to perish just yet. Those who had been 30 or 40 years engaged in the advancement of temperance principles, and were looking for some fruit as the result of their work, were not satisfied with the mere assertion of a democratic principle of the right to prohibit, and they would be greatly disappointed with the measure. There was, he owned, good reason for not applying the Bill to Ireland. Why should it be applied to Ireland? He admired the consistency of the right hon. Gentleman who, after giving Irish patriotism a measure, in which he practically said that the revenue of Ireland should depend on the consumption of whisky by the inhabitants, did not propose to give those inhabitants the power to prohibit the sale of whisky. A pretty mess he would have made of the matter if he had given that power! He (Mr. T. W. Russell) would support the First and Second Reading of the Bill, not because he approved of all its details, but because it conceded a principle for which he had long contended, though that principle was not extended in the way he and other temperance reformers desired.

*Mr. T. W. Russell*

MR. GOSCHEN (St. George's, Hanover Square): I simply rise to say that, so far as I have been able to ascertain, there is no desire on the part of the hon. Members sitting on these Benches to extend the discussion on this Bill, so as to prevent its introduction to-night. There is a great desire on our part to see the clauses of a Bill, which, as we conceive, so deeply affect both the trade and the population. However, our attitude will greatly depend on the production of the Bill. Although the discussion has been extremely short, looking at the great importance of the Bill, it has been a very interesting one. I think I shall express the general feeling of the House when I congratulate the hon. Member for Norwood (Mr. Tritton) on his exceedingly able speech, for as an advocate of temperance he has given us a speech which is extremely witty and flowing with humour. The right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer said that he hoped the Bill would not be debated in any Party spirit. I am sure he may rest satisfied that, although the measure will be sharply criticised, it will not be criticised from a Party point of view. If Parties are divided on the Bill, it is perfectly clear that the Temperance Party will not be entirely unanimous with regard to its provisions. I will now simply say that for our part we have now no desire to prolong discussion on the Bill.

MR. McLAGAN (Linlithgow) begged to thank Her Majesty's Government and the Chancellor of the Exchequer for introducing the Bill, which he could assure them would be received with satisfaction throughout the whole of the country. He thought, however, that it required amendment, and he should be ready to state his objections, and propose Amendments in Committee.

\*COLONEL NOLAN (Galway, N.) said, he did not pretend to speak for any Irish Members except himself. He could not say that he spoke for his constituents; for though they sometimes gave him instructions in the matter, he could not say that they had on the present occasion. He might be told that his position was weak as water, and so it was; but the

House might just as well listen to such a man as himself as to cock-sure men like the hon. Baronet the Member for Cumberland, the Member for South Tyrone, and the Member for Bradford—gentlemen who professed to know all about the matter, and who argued as if alcohol was an invention of the devil. The Bill, it was said, did not affect Ireland. Well, it was a three years' notice to quit to publicans in England, and, that being so, they might regard it as a four years' notice to quit to publicans in Ireland. This, or a similar Bill, applied to Ireland would ruin 300 or 400 respectable men in his constituency. His private opinion was that they would make very little difference in the consumption of alcohol unless they could change the latitude of these islands. They were told by the hon. Baronet the Member for Cumberland that crime and misery existed wherever alcohol was drunk, but he (Colonel Nolan) had seen it stated by an eminent statistician that murders were less frequent in those countries where the largest proportion of alcohol was consumed. And as hon. Members were aware, murder was far more rife in southern countries where little alcohol was drunk than it was in northern countries like Sweden and Russia, where alcohol was largely consumed. The trade generally was satisfied with the magistracy, and did not wish to be put under a new *régime*. He held that to place publicans now holding licences at the mercy of the whims of a majority of the community, who might deprive them of their living, would be as unjustifiable as to confiscate the Stock of the Bank of England. He had spoken to a great many people on the subject of this Bill, and he was sure a large number of his constituents would be very much annoyed with him if he did not vote against it. With regard to the closing of public-houses on Sunday, whatever might be its advantages, it meant offering a great inducement to people to sell liquor illicitly, and keeping a large number of the constabulary engaged in the endeavour to prevent the illegal traffic.

Motion agreed to.

Bill ordered to be brought in by Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr. Secre-

tary Asquith, Sir George Trevelyan, Sir John Hibbert, and Mr. Burt.

Bill presented, and read the first time. [Bill 233.]

### MOTION.

POLICE ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.  
(No. 105.)

COMMITTEE. [*Progress, 24th February.*]

Bill considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

On the Motion of Mr. HERBERT GLADSTONE the following Amendments were agreed to:—Page 1, leave out Clause 1. Clause 2, page 1, lines 11 and 12, leave out "and shall be read as one with the Police Act, 1890."

New Clause:—"Pay to include fire duty pay."—(*Mr. Samuel Hoare.*)

Objection being taken to Further Proceeding, the Chairman left the Chair to make his report to the House.

Committee report Progress; to sit again To-morrow.

### ORDERS OF THE DAY.

EDUCATION AND LOCAL TAXATION  
(SCOTLAND) (DISTRIBUTION GRANT).

MOTION FOR AN ADDRESS.

\*MR. DONALD CRAWFORD  
(Lanark, N.E.) moved—

"That an humble Address be presented to Her Majesty praying Her to withhold Her assent to a Minute of the Scotch Education Department, dated the 31st day of January 1893, providing for the Distribution of the Sum available for Secondary Education under Section 2 (1) (b) of 'The Education and Local Taxation Account (Scotland) Act, 1892.'"

He said that the origin of the Minute, which was a very important one, was the assignment by Parliament of the sum of £60,000 for the purposes of secondary education in Scotland. It was well-known, at all events, to the Scotch Members, that secondary education had been for some time in a languishing condition. While the elementary schools had received almost unlimited assistance from the bounty of Parliament, their very prosperity had rather tended to cast a shade upon secondary education, because so high a premium had been placed by the liberality of the grants upon the cultivation of the three R's and the other more elementary

subjects. The old parish schoolmaster of Scotland had passed away, and the burgh schools, stinted in means, had been gradually decaying and perishing, while even the Universities had somewhat encroached in another direction on the secondary education of Scotland. Consequently, the Scotch Members had been exceedingly glad to assign a portion of the equivalent grant to the purpose of secondary education. But the Minute, in his opinion, proceeded upon entirely mistaken lines; and if it were not withdrawn, or very greatly altered, it would produce a very evil prospect for secondary education in Scotland. He would proceed at once to point out what he considered the radical vice of this proposal. It seemed to him to violate the principle of Local Government. If there was one subject more than another which could be safely and properly entrusted to Local Bodies is was that of education. A very important contribution was made to Local Government by the Conservative Party in the last Parliament, and he appealed to them, as well as to the Members of his own Party, to give effect to the principle of Local Government on the present occasion. The extremely centralised system under which elementary education was now administered was of very recent growth, and was limited by the local institutions of School Boards. The time was well within living memory when grants by the Privy Council were a very small experiment in the way of education in Scotland. He did not say an insignificant experiment, because it was significant of a great expansion. It was only by what he might call an accident that, the Privy Council grants having been gradually enlarged, the Privy Council obtained the power of the purse. Although School Boards had since been established all over Scotland, the Privy Council, having the power of the purse in their hands, had been able, through the Scotch Education Department, to exercise a very powerful—he might almost say a despotic—influence upon education. In Wales the system of Local Government had been fully adopted, the intermediate education funds being administered by County Committees. He would ask the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary for Scotland (Sir G. Trevelyan) to put to himself the question whether, supposing a proposal were made for the re-organisation of the

*Mr. Donald Crawford*

secondary education of England, he believed for a moment that a bureaucratic and centralised system of administration would be tolerated in this country? If such a thing were proposed, he hoped the language of his right hon. Friend the Vice President of the Council (Mr. Acland) would be Parliamentary, as it always was, but he was sure it would be emphatic. When the majority of the Scottish Members sat on the Opposition side of the House, they fought very hard for the recognition of the principle of Local Government; but the question turned upon one point in a long Bill, and it was not surprising that they did not meet with complete success. They did, however, meet with some measure of success. The proposal, then laid on the Table, was withdrawn, and a strong Committee was appointed. It consisted of five gentlemen, all of whom had some special acquaintance with the subject of education. It did not report on the subject of the administration of the grant, and he very much regretted the fact; and their reason for not reporting was that that subject would involve wider consideration and possibly further legislation. The Committee, as the House would remember, was appointed to consider the proper mode of distributing the money, with especial reference to the system of Welsh secondary education; and by refraining from making proposals for its administration, they, in effect, prejudged the matter to a large extent in the wrong direction. By Act of Parliament the distribution of the money was to be settled by a Minute of the Education Department, to be approved by Parliament; and as the Committee made no suggestion as to the ultimate form of distribution, they left the framers of the Minutes entirely uncontrolled. Still, the control of Parliament remained, and he hoped the House that night would bring the scheme into entire harmony with proper principles. The Committee reported in favour of two things: One, the establishment of local Committees of Inquiry, and the other dealt with the detailed application of the money. With the first proposals he found no fault. But as to the details, he would at once say he thought they were open to two main objections: the first was the proposed reduction of the fee in the secondary schools to an average of £3 a

year, in return for which a grant of £3 per annum was to be given. To those who were familiar with Codes and capitation grants, and who were strongly imbued with the traditions of the Education Department, that might not seem a startling proposal, but to many of his friends in that House and out of it the demand that the fees in secondary schools should be reduced to £3 was most fantastic. The circumstances of these schools varied infinitely; these which charged the higher fees were often the most in need of assistance; and while he sympathised with the main object of the Minute, the giving of due encouragement to the poor, and those who could not afford higher education to enter the secondary schools, he felt that the result might be to degrade and pauperise some of the burgh schools, which would be a most unfortunate thing. That, no doubt, was not the intention of the Minute, but it was a possible result, and in some cases there was very serious risk of it. The schools varied materially in the amount of fee charged. Some had considerable endowments and were able to charge a lower fee; in others the lowness of the fee was due to the fact that the quality of the education imparted was lower. A number of schools would suffer severely if this Minute were enforced. The High School at Edinburgh had nowadays to stand a very severe competition from the hospital schools, some of which had almost unlimited endowments. These hospital schools were able to charge a lower fee than the Edinburgh High School, and in that way had attracted to themselves a large number of pupils. The High School fee probably doubled that at the hospital schools, yet under this Minute the fees at both were to be brought down to £3; and while the hospital school would gain by the change, the High School would suffer considerable financial loss. There was no equity in that. It was a case of "unto those that hath shall be given." Further, he contended that the system of capitation grants was not applicable to the organisation of secondary education. It savoured too much of the cast-iron and bureaucratic system, and he would be sorry if the shadow of the late Lord Sherbrooke were to stalk up and blight the Scotch educational standard. If

Codes and capitation grants were introduced into the Scotch system of higher education they would bitterly regret it. The right principle to be introduced was clearly that of Local Government, and the circumstances were such that the adoption of that principle would be particularly fruitful and was particularly desirable. There were special reasons why County and Burgh Bodies should have the administration of this money. The sum available was £57,000. Not very long ago a sum of £48,000 was placed at the disposal of the Local Authorities, which they were at liberty to apply to technical education. They had so applied it to a considerable extent, but their efforts had been much hampered by the fact that they had no existing machinery for using it, and no means of adding to the money available for the purpose. Here was an opportunity to give them greater liberty of action, because technical education need no longer be divorced from secondary education as at present; the two grants could be added together. This would be specially advantageous in some parts of the country where the secondary education most required partook largely of the character of technical education, and it would be well, therefore, for the money to be administered by the same people. That was not all. A further sum of £100,000 was placed at the disposal of the authorities by the same Act, with liberty to apply it to any object of public utility. It was complained that in many cases the present grant of £60,000 for secondary education, if it were distributed rateably, like the rest of the Equivalent Grant, would not go far enough, and that was the reason assigned for distributing it in the manner prescribed in the Minute. But if they wanted to increase the amount, why not secure its increase by handing it over to Local Bodies which have funds they can augment it with? It might be suggested that some districts were so poor that nothing would be practicable in the shape of secondary education out of the grant. Well, his reply was that those districts should wait till more money was available, in preference to existing schools being ruined by a false application of the money in the meantime. It was said that this pro-

posals was a temporary one. It certainly was intended by the Committee that it should not be of a permanent character, for they said—

"We also desire to state our opinion that it must be a matter of experience whether the system of capitation grants proves to be the most suitable way of assisting secondary education."

But there was nothing in the Minute to indicate that; in the meantime, the schools would get the grant, their financial systems would be totally subverted, and how would it be possible to restore them to their former condition? These were the grounds, stated far too briefly owing to the lateness of the hour, on which he felt compelled to appeal to the House to disapprove the Minute. He was sure that the Secretary for Scotland would not refuse to admit that the principle of Local Government which he had invoked was the right principle, that Parliament had acknowledged its importance, and that it was a principle especially cherished by the Liberal Party. If he was inclined to meet them in any degree, it must be by action, and not merely by reassuring words, because if once they adopted so purely and highly centralised a system, they would find it very difficult to alter it hereafter. He could not help remembering the exceptional history of the Minute; it was framed at a period of transition when one Parliament and one Government were giving way to a new Parliament and a fresh Ministry, and, therefore, the matter could not have had the attention which it deserved. Of course, the right hon. Gentleman would not desire to be relieved of any share of the responsibility, but it was to be hoped that further consideration had induced him to modify his views. This was not a subject on which they might expect a wave of popular opinion; it was one on which the country expected a lead from those who were qualified to give it, and one on which there was room for a constructive policy on the part of the right hon. Gentleman in the direction which he had endeavoured to point out.

Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That an humble Address be presented to Her Majesty praying Her to withhold Her Assent to a Minute of the Scotch Education

*Mr. Donald Crawford*

Department dated the 31st day of January 1893, providing for the Distribution of the Sum available for Secondary Education under Section 2 (1) (b) of 'The Education and Local Taxation Account (Scotland) Act, 1892.'—*(Mr. Donald Crawford.)*

THE SECRETARY FOR SCOTLAND (Sir G. TREVELYAN, Glasgow, Bridgeton): I think at this time of the night the House would prefer that I should at once state the conclusions at which the Government have arrived on this matter. The Act of last Session allotted a sum of £60,000 (less £3,000 for administrative purposes) for secondary education in Scotland. The proposal to allot the money was debated at great length, the Debate being in proportion to the interest felt in the subject rather than to the actual amount granted. Hon. Members on all sides were agreed that there were three objects in view: to improve existing secondary schools, to draw large numbers of children to those schools, and to establish such schools in country districts where there was no secondary education. The difficulty was that the money was limited, there being only £57,000, and there was no machinery to work with. In consequence of that, a Committee was appointed, and it reported last August. Some of the Members of the Committee, at any rate, enjoyed the confidence of all parties in Scotland. There was Lord Elgin, Sir John Cuthbertson, the hon. Member for the Glasgow and Aberdeen Universities, the present Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education in England, and Mr. Craik of the Scotch Education Department. These gentlemen made a series of recommendations, which I need not now read, and they attached to their Report the following paragraph:—

"We wish to point out that in this Report we do not enter into any question of administration which would involve wider consideration, and in all probability further legislation. We also desire to state our opinion that it must be a matter of experience whether a system of capitation grants proves to be the most suitable way of assisting secondary education in the future. While recommending the use of this method as the rule for the time being under the special circumstances of the case, we reserve our judgment as to the future application of this form of distribution as part of a permanent system."

At the beginning of the present Session their recommendations were minutely embodied in the Minute laid upon the table. One most important part of that Minute was the establishment of Advising Local Authorities. School Boards and County Councils were equally represented on these Committees, it being felt that as the money was the ratepayers' money, and as the question was an educational one, they ought to equally share the representation. The Committee have been received with great satisfaction by all Scotchmen; Scotland has taken great interest in the matter. Great energy was shown, and communities eagerly joined in electing the Committees. I know that some of the communities have not had a fair share of the money, and I think that Govan has been badly treated. It was a stretch of power on the part of the Scotch Department to call these Committees together before Parliament had sanctioned them; but the Government took the risk, and I hope the House will condone its action. But do not postpone for another two months the sanction of popular representative machinery all over Scotland. When the present Minute is passed I will inquire into the case of Govan. I should be very glad to meet its claims, for I think they are admissible; and if there are any other communities of Scotland with a like title to consideration, they also shall have my careful attention. But there are serious objections to this Minute, which come from other quarters. Some hon. Members object to the details of the distribution as made by the Central Authority, and others object to the Central Authority distributing the fund at all. What is asked is that a very much larger sum than the £200 laid down in the Minute should be given to secondary schools, and that the fee should not be limited to £3, but that schools which charge a very much higher fee should be allowed to share. I must ask hon. Gentlemen to consider what this means. Dr. Marshall, a Director of the Edinburgh High School, has been quoted. He recommended that the grant should be given to schools where fees of £8 were charged; that no grant should be given where a fee of £3 was charged. That is to say, that none of this money

should go to the poorer schools or to poorer children. Dr. Marshall admitted in his evidence that there was room for 100 free pupils in the Edinburgh High School. He admitted that, under the Minute, the school would receive £600 for these children; but he objected to receive free pupils, because he said that, in a town like Edinburgh, 100 free pupils introduced would probably have reduced the scholars by a similar number, because an idea would have got abroad that the school was getting more and more socially ineligible. Now, is that a use that we ought to put this small and precious sum to? The schools of Edinburgh, if we yielded to these representations, would get £500, and about £600, I suppose, in relief of fees; but the Edinburgh High School now gets £900 from the Common Fund and £900 from the rate, which is £6 for every child. If we were to give a further relief to the extent of £1,100 a year among them, and if the same was done in every school throughout Scotland, what would remain of the £57,000 for the outlying rural schools? Parliament allotted £57,000 to secondary education. I have read every word of these Debates, and, probably hon. Members remember what were the hopes of Parliament. The hopes of Parliament were that 10,000 fresh children should be attracted to the secondary schools, and that 5,000 children over the length and breadth of the land should have access to higher education of which they are at present destitute. And do not let hon. Members think that the advocates of those children are dumb at this moment. I hold in my hand a telegram from the Educational Institute of Scotland stating that they—that is to say, the elementary teachers of Scotland—are strongly opposed to any alteration of the Higher Education Minute, which would reduce the grant intended for the upper departments of ordinary schools. Now, if you consume the whole of this grant as under the requisition you would do, there would be nothing left whatever for these 15,000 children, who at present have not the opportunity of secondary education, and for whose benefit this £57,000 was especially given. And, in my opinion, we should lose a very great opportunity of giving all these 15,000 children—of a very different class



from the children of rich parents—an education which would not be unworthy of the old Scotch education adapted to modern needs and illuminated by modern light. Now, I have been arguing strongly against an alteration of the capitation grant as it at present exists in the Minutes, and I ask hon. Members to follow me very closely here. I come to another objection, that of those who object to a capitation grant at all—those who object to the distribution of the fund by Central Authority by means of a capitation grant extending over Scotland as a whole. I conceive what these hon. Members would prefer would be that this money should be allotted on the principle which we all know so well, I suppose—combination between valuation and population of each separate district, so that each separate district should have its share, and should dispose of it by local management. I have very great sympathy with this proposal, and I am not going to argue against this proposal—a proposal, as I say, with which I have the very strongest sympathy. What I must say is this: that if you are to have a capitation grant extending only to Scotland, this capitation grant cannot, in my opinion, be seriously modified, and the result of relaxing this capitation grant would be that the fund would undoubtedly become bankrupt. This is the scheme which has been laid before the County Committees and on the basis of which they are asked to name the schools among which the money should be distributed. Now, in adopting this scheme, we take *en bloc* all the recommendations of the Committee, because the Committee, so admirably composed as it was, was the only adviser which we then had. But we have now other advisers to consult; we have now the County Committees and the Burgh Committees; and I am bound to say that I have been very much impressed by the argument of the hon. Member, and I have also been much impressed by the most excellent resolution which is proposed from the first of these County Committees as reported—namely, the Committee of the County of Aberdeen—in which they say that, in order to secure an equable grant for secondary education in Scotland, and the maintenance of the due relations between the different parts

*Sir G. Trevelyan*

of the country, and in particular between urban and rural areas, it should be distributed and made available in a similar manner to the residue grant on a basis of the rateable value, and under the direction of the Scotch Education Department. This Committee resolved to memorialise the Secretary for Scotland in favour of apportioning the grant in this way. I think that, before we finally settle the secondary education of Scotland, it would be well to know what those who are able and qualified to speak for Scotland think. I purpose, and that at once and without delay, to send a circular to all the County Committees and the Burgh Committees, requesting them at the earliest possible opportunity to consider and report on a system under which each county should have its share of the grant allotted to it; under which a scheme of secondary education shall be drawn out with a free hand by the County or Burgh Committee, and submitted to the central department for approval; and I would indicate that that approval would not be withheld on one condition—that is to say, if the scheme should be based on the policy of giving secondary education to the greatest possible number of children, that is compatible with thorough educational efficiency. Such a circular would, I conceive, be in strict obedience to that paragraph of the Committee's Report to which I made reference early in my speech—the paragraph in which they report that they reserve their judgment. The School Boards and the Local Committees will themselves have the two systems to consider side by side from the point of view of what is best for their own locality, and what is best for Scotland as a whole. When we have their replies, I will communicate the general result to Parliament, and, if necessary, I will lay a Supplementary Minute on the Table. Whatever is done shall be done with the full knowledge of Parliament. Parliament shall be consulted; Parliament shall have an opportunity of pronouncing, and I trust that what will finally be arranged will be done with the concurrence of Parliament. But this Minute, constituting as it does the very Committees which I propose to consult—this Minute which, if it is suspended at this time, will suspend the

whole operation of this system throughout Scotland, I ask the House at the eleventh hour not to disallow. I am dealing quite frankly with the House. The final system of secondary education in Scotland shall not be arranged without the House having an opportunity of passing a judgment on it by debate and by vote; and I earnestly trust that, having made this explanation and given these pledges, the Debate may not be further prolonged.

MR. J. P. SMITH (Lanark, Par-tick) said, he was exceedingly glad to hear from the right hon. Gentleman his adherence to the Minute, and that the Minute would at present go on, because he thought that anything else would throw them into very great confusion in the meantime. He was also glad of the assurance given in regard to the important Parish of Govan; but he must say, with regard to the general lines the right hon. Gentleman had laid down, that he disagreed entirely with what he had said. His hon. Friend the Member for East Lanarkshire called upon him to go in for a constructive policy; but it seemed to him that the right hon. Gentleman's words contained a distinctly destructive policy as to the best schools in Scotland. The right hon. Gentleman's idea of secondary education seemed to be simply quantity and not quality. What they wanted was to keep up, and not to injure, the old historic schools of Scotland, while, at the same time, doing what they could towards giving chances of secondary education to others in different parts of Scotland. What they regarded as the true principle of democratic equality in regard to secondary education was that every capable boy should have a chance of getting the best education, and not that education should be shoved into the mouths of the greatest number of children. They believed that this system under the present Minute would do very great harm to the best schools which already existed in Scotland. He spoke of the burgh schools, in which the fees were considerably larger than the others. The right hon. Gentleman spoke as if he imagined that the amount of those fees varied according to

the social eligibility of the schools; it did nothing of the kind. The fees varied as to the poverty of the schools; but well-endowed schools had no need to charge high fees. The poorly-endowed schools could not possibly reduce their fees to the level of £3 while they kept up their present standard of education, and it was those schools which, in a great many parts of Scotland, were doing very excellent work that would suffer under the scheme of the Minute. Nobody desired that anything like the whole of the money granted should go to these schools. The right hon. Gentleman drew an admirable picture from Dr. Marshall's evidence of what happened. In regard to the High School in Edinburgh, he objected to free pupils; but Dr. Marshall certainly did not agree with many other schools in that respect. In the High School in Glasgow there were 53 pupils sitting on the benches along with the other scholars, receiving education free. Nobody was any the wiser, and the old system worked well. Another thing which was stated in regard to Dr. Marshall's evidence was that he actually suggested there should be a minimum, as well as a maximum, fee as a condition of receiving the grant. He did not know whether he knew that that was the actual condition prevailing in the country that was held up for their admiration, and on which the secondary schools worked in Wales. It seemed to him that any attempt to force down the fees must necessarily have the effect of imposing a standard which parents would take to be the right one. Schools would not be able in any way to get higher fees, and the result would be that they would be obliged to give a very much inferior article if they lowered their fees. It was absurd to suppose that a large share of the grant would be used up for the purposes of these schools. Their number was comparatively small. He had put down an Amendment which stood on the Paper making one or two suggestions, one suggestion being that the maximum grant to be given to these schools should be raised from £200, as proposed in the Minute, to £500, as was advocated by many people. The estimate which the Committee made of the charge given by this lump grant was that it would be

given to 20 burgh schools at a general average of £150, making only £3,000 out of the £57,000 given. Supposing they doubled that, supposing they made it from £200 to £500, and took an average of £300, that would only make £6,000, and a very small amount of money given that way would just make the difference to these schools. Of course, there were a great many schools that this scheme fitted completely; the schools, for example, in his own constituency were very well fitted indeed. They were the fee-paying schools, which at present were receiving money under the Parliamentary grant, but were struggling with the 9d. limit which had been imposed on them in the last few years by a pure accident. He grudged very much—comfortable though it would make them—that the charge of these schools should be transferred from the broad back of the general Parliamentary grant and put upon this charge of £60,000, but those were the schools which most benefited by the scheme as it stood. The policy followed in Wales was the contrary policy of cutting down; there the fees had been encouraged. This point which he had raised was the main point upon which he regarded this Minute, and the one upon which he would press the right hon. Gentleman to re-consider the subject.

MR. R. T. REID (*Dumfries, &c.*) said that, if the House complied with the request of the right hon. Gentleman, to defer pressing for the withdrawal of this Minute, some other Minute could be brought forward so that they would still have control over this Minute, and be able to again, if necessary, press for its withdrawal.

SIR G. TREVELYAN said that certainly nothing would be done to settle the system of secondary education in Scotland without a Minute of some sort, which the House could decide upon.

MR. R. T. REID asked the House to permit him to point out what the effect of the Minute would be upon one school in his own constituency, in regard to which the feeling was absolutely unanimous. The position was this: that if this Minute was applied, and if they

*Mr. J. P. Smith*

assumed that the maximum grant be given, and if they marshalled all the children in such a way that they might each of them receive the highest capitation grant, they would get £13 per annum more than they received at the present time. On the other side, in order to comply with the requirements of the Department, the school would have to expend at the minimum £450 extra, and at the maximum £820 extra, and it did not end there. In addition to spending an annual outlay of between £2,000 and £3,000 in order to comply with the requirements, and, further than that in order to make the anomaly complete, this school, which was the secondary school not only for the Burgh of Dumfries, but also for the County of Dumfries and the Stewardry of Kirkcudbright, would have to incur this capital outlay not at the expense of these two counties, but at the expense of the Burgh of Dumfries. How could they stand that without protest? His right hon. Friend would be the very last man to sanction an injustice of that kind. If this annual sum was spent by the school that he had mentioned they would not even then be entitled to the sums of money which his right hon. Friend's Minute promised, because the Minute said the funds were to be paid only so far as available. It was quite absurd to suppose that they could assent to anything of the kind. Nobody desired that outlying country schools should be in any way starved or ill-used. His right hon. Friend had given no practical encouragement whatever to the complete and temperate argument of his hon. Friend the Member for Lanarkshire in favour of having local control. The system proposed was not a good system, and the proper method was to, as in Wales, allot to the localities their sum of money and allow them to spend it.

SIR G. TREVELYAN said that not a penny of the sum should be paid until another Minute had been issued.

MR. R. T. REID said that, so far as he was concerned, if the money was not paid in the meantime, and the Minute was laid on the Table, he would be content. The right hon. Gentleman had not, however, given any practical promise that he would adopt the scheme of his hon. Friend.

SIR M. J. STEWART (Kirkcudbright) said, he wished to supplement the remarks of his hon. Friend who had just sat down in regard to this very important matter. It was practically life and death to secondary education in his particular part of Scotland. They were really interested in attaining better education. The endowments of their high schools were very small, and the obligations were very great. Almost every school differed, because their endowments differed, and they would be utterly ruined if something was not done to raise this very low fee of £3. He urged the right hon. Gentleman to take every school into consideration in order that he might perfect the scheme. He thanked the right hon. Gentleman for his answer, and trusted he would make every effort to bring this scheme more in unison with the actual requirements of the day.

MR. HUNTER (Aberdeen, N.) thought it would be a pity if the right hon. Gentleman were to leave the House without a clear expression of opinion from the Scotch Members on two points. The whole mischief which had been complained of arose from the fact that some gentleman sitting in Whitehall was undertaking to manage the whole educational affairs in Scotland. That was a thing they should not submit to. They should have no interference from Whitehall from anybody, and it was absolutely necessary that the Local Authorities should have complete control over this work. Again, he could not imagine any principle more absurd and bad than this principle of capitation based upon a reduction of fees. They did not want a reduction of fees. Those who could pay the fees ought to pay them; and if provision were made for the poor children, it should be made by bursaries to the poor children, and not by a reduction of fees to those who could afford them.

\*SIR CHARLES DALRYMPLE (Ipswich) wished to know whether the Minute was withdrawn or not? The County and Burgh Committees were making inquiries, and he thought it would have been decent to have waited for their Report before discarding the Minute. He thought it

would be important that these Committees should continue in existence to be the local advisers of the Department in future. He trusted he was right in supposing that the Minute had not been withdrawn.

SIR G. TREVELYAN: The Minute is not withdrawn.

SIR JAMES FERGUSSON: Is that paragraph in line A in the Minute to stand and to be a hard and fast line?

SIR G. TREVELYAN: What I said was that not one penny of public money should be granted till another Minute had been laid before Parliament.

MR. HALDANE said, as he understood the matter, his right hon. Friend did not withdraw this Minute. He understood, however, that not a penny of the public money dealt with by this Minute should be expended under it, but that a new Minute should be framed in the Scotch Office and laid before the House, a sufficient opportunity being given for discussing it. On that understanding it seemed to him that his right hon. Friend had made a reasonable concession to Scotch opinion on the subject, and one with which they might all be satisfied.

\*MR. DONALD CRAWFORD thought the right hon. Gentleman had met the Motion in a very candid manner, and the concession, if he rightly understood it, was very nearly all they could expect. He therefore very gladly accepted the concession, and asked for leave to withdraw the Motion.

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

#### NON-PAYMENT OF RATES (SCOTLAND)

##### MOTION FOR A RETURN.

Moved for,

"Return of the number of Rated Inhabitants in each Burgh and County in Scotland whose names were omitted from the Parliamentary, Municipal, or County Rolls in consequence of Non-payment of Parochial, Municipal, or County Rates in the years 1891 and 1892." — (Mr. Renshaw.)

Motion agreed to.

SIR G. TREVELYAN: I have written a letter saying that this Return was opposed.

MR. SPEAKER: When I put the Question the right hon. Gentleman did not oppose it, and there was no opposition to the Return, which was agreed to.

#### REGIMENTAL DEBTS (CONSOLIDATION)

BILL.—(No. 116.)

Considered in Committee.

Committee report Progress; to sit again upon Thursday.

#### COINAGE (No. 2) BILL.—(No. 221.)

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Clause 1.

Committee report Progress; to sit again upon Thursday.

#### ECCLESIASTICAL COMMISSIONERS

(METROPOLITAN LESSEES).

Copy ordered, "of the Circular issued by the Ecclesiastical Commissioners to their Metropolitan lessees, with reference to the transfer of the reversionary interest in the property to the lessees." —(*Lord Randolph Churchill.*)

#### SANITARY DISTRICTS (ACCOMMODATION FOR INFECTIOUS DISEASES).

Return ordered, "showing the area and population according to the last Census of every Urban and Rural Sanitary District in England and Wales, and also showing, as regards every such District and every Port Sanitary District in England and Wales, whether the Sanitary Authority had on or before the 31st day of December 1892, made special provision for any accommodation of the nature of an Isolation Hospital (other than in connection with Workhouses) for cases of Infectious Disease arising in their District, and, if so, giving the following further particulars:—

1. Whether the accommodation has been provided (a) by the Sanitary Authority independently; (b) by the Sanitary Authority in combination with other authorities as a Joint Hospital Board; (c) by the Sanitary Authority in combination with other authorities under section 121

of "The Public Health Act, 1875"; or whether the Sanitary Authority have made any agreement or arrangement for the admission of patients into hospitals belonging to other Local Authorities or to private Bodies.

2. Where the accommodation has been provided by the Sanitary Authority independently or in combination with other Authorities; (a) description and area of site, where situated; (b) whether the Hospital has been erected on plans approved by the Local Government Board; or whether it was a Workhouse Hospital transferred to the Sanitary Authority with the Board's sanction.
3. The date since which the accommodation has been available;
4. The number of beds available;
5. Whether there is separate accommodation (a) for the Sexes; (b) for different diseases in separate pavilions, and, if so, for how many diseases; (c) and special accommodation for Small Pox Patients;
6. The number of cases treated in the Hospital during each of the five years, 1888 to 1892, inclusive, distinguishing Small Pox, Scarlet Fever, Typhus, Enteric Fever, Diphtheria, and other Diseases;
7. The rate of charge, if any, made for maintenance of patients;
8. The amounts received from patients in each of the five years 1888 to 1892 inclusive;
9. The cost of (a) site; (b) hospital buildings;
10. Whether such cost has been met (a) out of moneys raised by means of loans; or (b) out of current rates, or otherwise than by means of loans;
11. The cost of maintenance of Hospital for each of the five years 1888 to 1892, inclusive;
12. Ambulance, nature of;
13. Disinfecting apparatus, nature of;
14. The arrangements for Medical Attendance." — (*Mr. Johnson-Ferguson.*)

House adjourned at twenty minutes before Two o'clock.

## HOUSE OF LORDS,

*Tuesday, 28th February 1893.*

Several Lords—Took the Oath.

PUBLIC AUTHORITIES PROTECTION  
BILL.—(No. 6.)

## REPORT OF AMENDMENTS.

Amendments reported (according to Order).

THE LORD CHANCELLOR (Lord HERSCHELL) : My Lords, I have to propose several Amendments that are really little more than verbal, changing the numbers of the sections, and bringing them into accordance with the general provisions in the body of the Bill.

Further Amendments made ; and Bill to be read 3<sup>a</sup> on Thursday next.

## COLONIAL BILLS.

## MOTION FOR AN ADDRESS.

\*THE EARL OF ONSLOW, in moving

"That a humble Address be presented to Her Majesty for a Return of the names of Bills passed by both Houses of the Legislature in Colonies possessing responsible Government to which Her Majesty has not given Her Assent ; showing in each case whether the principle contained in such measure is or is not at the present date law in the Colony,"

said, he had put down the notice on the Paper for this Return, because, although it was unquestioned that Her Majesty had power to disallow the measures passed by the Colonial Legislatures, it might be interesting at this time and under present circumstances to their Lordships, and to the public generally, to learn how far the instructions given by Her Majesty on the advice of Ministers who commanded the confidence of the Imperial Parliament as to withholding Her Assent to any Bill maintained the unquestioned and unquestionable supremacy of the Imperial Prerogative intact.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY (Earl SPENCER) : My Lords, I am authorised by my noble Friend the noble Marquess the Secretary for the Colonies (the Marquess of Ripon)

to say he has no objection to the Return which the noble Lord has just asked for.  
Motion agreed to.

Address for—

"Return of the names of Bills passed by both Houses of the Legislature in Colonies possessing responsible Government to which Her Majesty has not given Her Assent ; showing in each case whether the principle contained in such measure is or is not at the present date law in the colony."—(*The Earl of Onslow.*)

TRUSTEE (CONSOLIDATION) BILL  
[H.L.].—(No. 10.)

Order of the Day for the House to be put into Committee, read, and discharged.

## ADMINISTRATION OF ESTATES (CONSOLIDATION) BILL [H.L.].—(No. 11.)

Order of the Day for the House to be put into Committee, read, and discharged.

House adjourned at twenty-five minutes before Five o'clock, to Thursday next, a quarter past Ten o'clock.

## HOUSE OF COMMONS,

*Tuesday, 28th February 1893.*

## PRIVATE BUSINESS.

THAMES WATERMEN AND LIGHTERMEN BILL (*by Order.*)

## SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."

MR. WOOTTON ISAACSON (Tower Hamlets, Stepney), in moving that the Bill be read a second time upon this day six months, said : There are three Bills before the House dealing with this subject. Two of the Bills are called the Watermen and Lightermen and the Bargeowners' Liability Bills. Those Bills were brought in last year in the month of February. They passed the Standing Orders Committee, and were referred to a Select Committee. The Committee had a great many sittings, and the result was that the matter which so interested the watermen and lightermen was conceded. But owing to that Parliament ceasing to exist the Bill was allowed to lapse and had to be

revived this Session. I was advised that when this Bill was revived I should bring forward the identical Bill which was brought forward last year, and which went before the Committee. I have done so, and I also brought forward the Bargeowners Bill. These Bills treat of exactly the same matter as the Thames Watermen and Lightermen Bill, which has now been brought in by my hon. Friend the Member for Wandsworth, and the hon. Baronet the ex-Lord Mayor of London, Member for the City. I must point out that the Watermen's and Lightermen's Company is a corporate body in the City of London, whose funds are mainly supported by watermen and lightermen of the River Thames. Out of a total income of £2,683, the men contribute no less a sum than £1,611. But the Watermen's and Lightermen's Company put down their annual income as £2,683, whereas there is a sum of money amounting to £376, received as dividends on Stock which they have added to their annual income. This Bill is now brought forward as a Private Bill by the Watermen's and Lightermen's Company. As a matter of fact, we know what a very expensive matter it is to bring forward a Private Bill, but this Bill is actually brought forward in order, if possible, to kill the Watermen and Lightermen Bill and the Bargeowners Bill, which were really passed through Committee last year. We feel it a great shame that after having gone through the great trouble of a Committee, that having heard evidence, which we did for many days together, and after having done all we possibly could to get what the men most needed—namely, a representation on the Committee which was conceded, we feel it a great shame that these gentlemen who represent the City of London should come down to the House and endeavour to kill the Watermen and Lightermen Bill and Bargeowners Bill. I must state that when that Bill went through Committee the Watermen's and Lightermen's Company employed eminent counsel to oppose it. They went to enormous expense, and I must add that they opposed the Bill with considerable bitterness. But, notwithstanding that, we succeeded in all we went for, and we do feel that it is a great pity that there is no law by which a lapsed Bill can be revived in order that we might go back to

the Committee just as we left it, and so make law of what has been really decided by the Committee. I say that this Bill has been brought forward at an enormous expense, from money subscribed by these watermen and lightermen in order to kill the Bargeowners Bill. All I want is to have the Bill referred to the same Committee that dealt with the Watermen and Lightermen's Bill and the Bargeowners Bill. I shall not take a division on it. If that is conceded we shall be protected and our rights will be maintained, namely, that our watermen and lightermen will then have the representation on the Committee they desire.

\*MR. STEWART WALLACE (Tower Hamlets, Limehouse) : I desire to second the Motion which has been made by the hon. Member for Stepney, not from any desire to give the promoters trouble, but to give time for an understanding to be arrived at between them and the barge-men and lightermen, who desire some amendments in their interests to be introduced into the Bill. I believe that if the Bill be not read a second time such an understanding will be arrived at, and would appeal to the hon. Member for Stepney to press the question to a division.

Amendment proposed, to leave out the word "now" and at the end of the Question to add the words "upon this day six months."—(Mr. Wootton Isaacson.)

Question proposed, "That the word 'now' stand part of the Question."

\*MR. H. KIMBER (Wandsworth) : I simply contented myself with the desire to save the time of the House when I moved the Bill without explanation. I thought my hon. Friend when he rose was going to support my Bill, but he has referred to other Bills, and I submit that they are not now before the House and cannot be discussed. I should like to make a simple statement as to what this Bill is. The Watermen's Company is a very old company, some hundreds of years old, to whom was committed in 1859 by Statute certain duties as to the registration of craft on the River Thames. They have to register, and have done their best to fulfil those obligations and duties. The Thames Conservancy made certain regulations as to craft in the River Thames, one of which was that all craft

of over 50 tons burden should be navigated in that part of the Thames which was under the jurisdiction by two watermen. But, in consequence of not knowing what tons meant, and the company not having power to enforce an accurate return, many vessels became registered as under 50 tons which ought to have been registered as over 50 tons, thereby evading the regulation of the Thames Conservancy, and endangering life and property. Then, as to their boats, there was no restriction as to the number to be carried. They were not in such a state as this company was to enforce restrictions. It is simply to remedy this insufficiency of powers that this Bill is now placed before the House. It does not interfere in the slightest degree with the rights of the watermen. I represent one of the largest riparian constituencies, and am able to speak with knowledge on this subject. The present Bill repeals three or four of the clauses of the Act of 1859, and substitutes for them improved regulations for the enforcement of the intention of the Legislature in the Act of 1859. It would be improper for me on the Second Reading to go into the details by which that arrangement is to be effected, but I do submit to the House that it is the most proper course for this Bill to be referred to a Committee in the ordinary way. The hon. Member says it ought to be referred to the same Committee as the other Bills. Well, when that Committee is proposed it will be time enough to propose that it be referred to them, but how it is possible to refer this Bill to a Committee on another Bill that is not in existence I do not understand. I press the Second Reading of the Bill.

**MR. WOOTTON ISAACSON :** These Bills have just passed the Committee on Standing Orders. The very clauses that are in this Bill are identical with those that are in the Bargeowners Bill, and there is no necessity for this company, with so small an income—two-thirds of which is supplied by the men themselves—to bring this Bill forward.

**\*MR. J. W. MELLOR (York, W.R., Sowerby) :** I am very glad to hear that my hon. Friend does not wish to take a Division on the subject, because having looked at the Bill, and having heard his reason for the course he has taken, I have come to the conclusion

that there is no reason why the Bill should not go to a Committee in the ordinary way. The hon. Member who moved the Second Reading has shown that it is not intended to do any harm to anybody, but that it is merely intended to carry out the provisions of the Thames Conservancy Act, 1859. At the present time the company have no means of knowing whether the particulars given to them with regard to the craft are accurate or not. Now, I think that is a state of things that requires some remedy, but what I rose for at the present time was to say that I hope the House will send this Bill to a Committee. Then my hon. Friend might ask to have the two Bills he has alluded to referred to the same Committee, but I hope he will not interfere with this Bill at the present stage.

**\*MR. SPEAKER :** Does the hon. Gentleman withdraw the Motion?

**MR. WOOTTON ISAACSON :** Provided they go to the same Committee.

**MR. KIMBER :** I assent to no such condition.

**MR. WOOTTON ISAACSON :** In that case I will divide on it.

Question put, and agreed to.

Main Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read a second time, and committed.

## QUESTIONS.

### LIVERPOOL POST OFFICE.

**MR. MACDONALD (Tower Hamlets, Bow) :** I beg to ask the Postmaster General whether it is a fact that 15 clerks in the Liverpool Post Office have been punished for bringing certain official irregularities under the notice of the Postmaster General; whether the officers in question will be afforded an opportunity of proving the charges alleged to be false, by reference to officials documents; whether the irregularities were submitted in response to an order of the Postmaster General; and whether, under the circumstances, he will reconsider his decision?

**THE POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. ARNOLD MORLEY, Nottingham, E.) :** The facts are not quite accurately stated in the question of the hon. Member. I regret to say that I was compelled to



punish the sorting clerks referred to for bringing forward grave charges which could not be substantiated, and for adopting a mode of procedure which is irregular. I have no intention of altering my decision.

#### THE BOTLEY STRAWBERRY TRADE.

**MR. WICKHAM** (Hants, Petersfield): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he is aware that the strawberry trade at Botley and its neighbourhood in Hampshire is seriously threatened by the increase of rates of the South Western Railway, especially for the carriage of empties; and whether he will take steps to compel the company to revert to their former rates?

**THE SECRETARY TO THE BOARD OF TRADE** (Mr. BURT, Morpeth): My right hon. Friend the President of the Board of Trade has asked me to answer the questions addressed to him to-day. The President of the Board of Trade has received a complaint from the strawberry trade at Botley and neighbourhood as regards the increase of rates on the South-Western Railway. He is in communication with the Company through the Railway Association on the subject. There is no power to compel the Company to revert to their former rates.

#### BARGES IN THE THAMES ESTUARY.

**MAJOR RASCH** (Essex, S.E.): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether his attention has been called to the frequent loss of life on the estuary of the Thames through the running down of Essex barges by steamers; and whether he will consider the expediency of extending Rule 15 (Conservancy bye-laws) to Gravesend, and applying to it passenger steamers?

**MR. BURT**: Details of all collisions resulting in loss of life are given in the Appendices to the Wreck Abstracts which are annually presented to Parliament. No loss of life was reported during the five years ended in June last from the running down of barges belonging to Essex in the estuary of the Thames, either above or below Gravesend. Two barges trading with places in Essex, but belonging elsewhere, were, during the same period, run into below Gravesend, resulting in the loss of two lives, and two barges of the same de-

scription and employment were run into above Gravesend, also resulting in the loss of two lives. The Thames Conservancy have full and exclusive power to make rules for the navigation of the Thames, and the Board of Trade have no authority to extend their existing rules.

#### SECOND DIVISION CIVIL SERVICE CLERKS.

**SIR FREDERICK DIXON-HARTLAND** (Middlesex, Uxbridge): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether he will either state or give a Return of the number of Second Division Clerks of the Civil Service promoted to the 1st Division or to higher posts during the last 10 years, stating the promotions to each office respectively; the total number of appointments made during the same period to the 1st Division; and the number of recommendations for promotion of Second Division Clerks received during the same period from the proper departments and not acted on?

**\*THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY** (Sir J. T. HIBBERT, Oldham): I am prepared to give the information asked for in the first two paragraphs for the period during which the present system of Civil Service organisation has been in force—namely, from September 10, 1888, the date of the second Report of the Royal Commission on Civil Establishments. The number of appointments of Second Division Clerks to the Upper Division and to higher posts since that date has been as follows, namely:—Admiralty, 17; Board of Trade, 3; Bankruptcy Department, 6; Patent Office, 1; Chief Secretary's Office (Ireland) 4; Customs, 2; Fishery Board for Scotland, 1; Inland Revenue, 50; Irish Land Commission, 2; Local Government Board (England), 5; Local Government Board (Ireland), 1; Public Works Office (Ireland), 7; Science and Art Department, 1; Secretary for Scotland's Office, 1; Valuation Office, Dublin, 6; War Office, 1; Woods and Forests Office, 1;—total, 109. I assume that the object of the second paragraph is to ascertain the number of appointments from outside the service by the scheme of open competition known as Class I., and excluding those examinations in which technical knowledge is re-

quired. The number of appointments so made since September 10, 1888, is 18. Only one recommendation for promotion from the Second Division to the Upper Division under the Orders in Council has been refused, and that only pending a revision of the establishment of the Department. I cannot find that more than five applications from departments for the creation of staff posts of the Second Division have not been acted on, the reason being that the Treasury have not been satisfied that a case for the creation of the posts had been made out.

#### THE JUDGES' ASSIZE PROPOSALS.

MR. GREENE (Shrewsbury) : I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether Her Majesty's Government have taken, or will in the present Session take, steps to carry into effect all, or some, and which of the Resolutions of the Council of Judges of the Supreme Court submitted in July last to the Secretary of State with their Report, that it would be expedient to make such amendments in the Judicature Acts and otherwise as may be necessary for giving effect to the Resolutions aforesaid ; and whether Her Majesty's Government will decline to adopt such of the Resolutions as relate to the abolition of civil assizes in any and which of the county towns of England and Wales, where they have heretofore been holden ?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. ASQUITH, Fife, E.) : Answering the second part of the hon. Member's question first, it is practically impossible, in the face of the strong and general feeling which has been manifested against the proposal, to ask Parliament to adopt the scheme for the abolition of civil assizes in any of the county towns. That being so, it has become very difficult to determine how to proceed with the recommendation of the learned Judges, which their Lordships expressly declared to be, to a great extent, founded upon the adoption of that scheme. The Lord Chancellor, however, has the matter under consideration, and expects to be soon in a position to propose legislation in respect of those parts of the Judges' Report for which the Government may be responsible. All those parts of the Report which deal with practice and pro-

cedure, or with arrangements for judicial sittings, are within the power of the Judges themselves, as a body or through their Rule Committee. The Lord Chancellor is in communication with them on the subject, and hopes shortly to bring some proposals before the Rule Committee.

#### IRISH LIGHTHOUSES.

MR. T. M. HEALY (Louth, N.) : I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether the attendance to the rocks and isles on the south coast of Ireland lighthouses is better now than when performed by the local contractors ; what is the difference in the expenditure between the steamer employed now and the former attendance by local contractors ; whether a promise was given that the Tearaght, the Skellip, Rock-a-Bill, Beeves Rock, and the Maiden's Rocks should be made relieving stations ; whether he is aware that families have to live on these places for three or four years without education or divine worship ; and whether the promise with respect to these rocks will now be fulfilled ?

MR. BURT : The attendance by steamer costs more than twice what it did when undertaken by local contractors, but it is far more regularly and efficiently performed than by their small sailing luggers. Whilst the Commissioners of Irish Lights do not appear to have made such a promise as is implied in the question, they are alive to the desirability of making some of their more exposed lighthouses relief stations. The men usually stay at a station for the length of time mentioned. The question of providing facilities for education and church attendance for the families of those who are employed on rock lighthouses which are not relieving stations is one of much difficulty, but the Commissioners state that these points are taken into consideration on all occasions as much as is consistent with the interests of the Service.

MR. T. M. HEALY : The hon. Member says the expense of the attendance by steamer is more than double ; upon whom does the extra burden fall ?

MR. BURT : I am not prepared to answer that question. If the hon. and learned Member wishes for any supplemental information I will ask him to put his question down.

## SAFETY LAMPS FOR COAL MINERS.

**SIR HENRY ROSCOE** (Manchester, S.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether his attention has been directed to a new modification of the Ashworth - Hepplethwaite - Gray safety lamp for coal miners, invented by Professor Clowes of the Nottingham University College, by means of which the presence of traces of fire damp hitherto incapable of detection can be estimated; and whether, in view of the great importance of this discovery as tending to diminish the risks to human life attending the getting of coal, he will instruct Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Coal Mines to have this new lamp thoroughly tested, and if found to be successful, he will see that it is introduced into general use by firemen and others engaged in testing the air of coal mines?

**MR. ASQUITH**: Yes, my attention has been called to the safety lamp invented by Professor Clowes; it has been referred to the Mines Inspectors, and is at present under investigation by them.

## CLOGHER HEAD PIER.

**DR. AMBROSE** (Louth, S.): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether, in view of the fact that £19,251 has been expended on the construction of a pier at Clogher Head, County Louth, contributed partly by the locality and partly by the Treasury, and that, owing to deviations from the original plans approved of by the Board of Works, the pier is now practically useless, the Government will fulfil the promise of their predecessors, made March 10th, 1892, to make a further grant, and add 80 feet to present pier?

**\*SIR J. T. HIBBERT**: The available balance under the Fishery Piers Act of 1883 is already appropriated to other works, but as soon as these are finished and the amount accruing from repayments under the Act reaches a sum sufficient to warrant the commencement of the "cant" at the end of the Clogher Head Pier, alluded to in my predecessor's answer of the 10th March, 1892, that work will be proceeded with.

## WOOLWICH ORDNANCE DEPARTMENT.

**MR. HANBURY** (Preston): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether it is the fact that foremen of the Ordnance Department at Woolwich and the other stations are paid for overtime while those at outlying stations are not paid; whether foremen who may be called upon to perform special duty when the stores are closed are paid at some stations and not at others; and what is the limit of time for which a foreman may be called upon to do ordinary business without pay after the ordinary business hours?

**THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY TO THE WAR OFFICE** (Mr. WOODALL, Hanley): Foremen of the Ordnance Store Department at Woolwich are paid on a daily rate, which carries with it pay for overtime. Foremen at out stations have weekly wages, which do not carry overtime payment. There is no limit of time during which a foreman may be called on to work.

**MR. HANBURY**: What does the hon. Gentleman mean by not "carrying" overtime?

**MR. WOODALL**: A foreman on day wage is entitled to overtime; one on weekly wage is not.

## THE NEW MAGAZINE RIFLE.

**MR. HANBURY**: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War if he can state the particular patents, with their official description and the names of the patentees, in connection with the new magazine rifle, in respect of which awards of money have been made or offered; and what was the particular amount in the case of each of such patents?

**MR. WOODALL**: The British Magazine Rifle Company have been awarded a royalty of 2s. per arm up to 500,000 arms (£50,000 in all) in full discharge of all claims under all the patents owned by the Company which affect the Lee-Metford rifle; but no special amount was fixed with regard to any particular patent. The patents held by the Company, and thus referred to, were one of 1879 in the name of Mr. W. R. Lake; one of 1887 taken out by James P. Lee; and three of 1887 and one of 1888 in the name of Joseph

James Speed. In addition to these, a payment of £1,000 has been offered in connection with a patent of 1890 standing in the names of Frederick James Penn and John Deeley.

MR. HANBURY: Is it not a fact that Speed, in respect of whose patent payment has been made to these people, is a foreman at Enfield?

MR. WOODALL: Speed is in the employ of the War Department.

MR. HANBURY: On the Army Estimates I shall call attention to the payments made in respect of these patents.

#### THE POST OFFICE AND BANK CHEQUES.

MR. GODSON (Kidderminster): I beg to ask the Postmaster General whether a bank which acts for the Post Office in any town where there is not any branch of the Bank of England has any right to charge a commission for cashing a Bank of England cheque sent down by the Post Office Authorities to a depositor in the Post Office Savings Bank in that place in payment of a deposit withdrawn.

MR. A. MORLEY: I am not in a position to answer the general question of the hon. Member, but if he will acquaint me with the circumstances of the case which he has in his mind, I will have the case looked into.

#### THE INDIA OFFICE ESTABLISHMENT.

SIR SEYMOUR KING (Hull, Central): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India whether an Official Report on the cost of the India Office Establishment was compiled in or about 1885 by Colonel Conway Gordon; whether Colonel Conway Gordon made any proposals for reducing the Home Charges of the Indian Government; and whether the Secretary of State will cause the Report to be laid upon the Table?

\*THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA (MR. GEORGE RUSSELL, North Beds.): Major Conway Gordon compiled at Simla, in the year 1883, a work entitled: *Notes on the Accounts of the Home Treasury of the Government of India from 1851-2 to 1883-4*. It was intended to deal with the whole subject of the Home Charges, including those for the India Office Establishment; but as the work was never completed—as the subject of the

Home Charges has been very carefully considered since then by the Secretary of State in Council, in communication with the Government of India, as most of Colonel Conway Gordon's suggestions had been either anticipated, or have since been acted upon, or are now out of date, and as the incomplete work consists of three folio volumes, the Secretary of State does not consider that any advantage would be gained by laying it upon the Table.

#### THE POLICE AS RATE COLLECTORS.

MR. SHEEHAN (Kerry, E.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, with reference to the practice of some Magistrates in Ireland of refusing to address warrants for the levying of poor rates to the Constabulary as provided by Statute, whether the attention of the Magistrates has been directed to the unanimous judgment of the Exchequer Division in Ireland in the case of the Queen (Jones) *v.* Barry (reported in 23 *Irish Law Times Reports*, page 28), where it was held—

"That the execution of such warrants is now cast upon the police and not upon the complainant;"

and to the further case, *re* Presentments of the Baronies of Forth and Rathvilly (23 *Irish Law Times Reports*, p. 33), where it was held by Mr. Justice O'Brien on circuit that—

"Warrants issued by justices for the collection of county cess, in pursuance of section 152 of the Grand Jury Act, should be addressed to the sub-inspector or the head constable of Constabulary, or other person, in accordance with the provisions of Section 25, Sub-Section 2, of the Petty Sessions Act, and not to the barony cess collector."

And as the identical sections of the Acts of Parliament govern the collection of county cess and poor rate, whether instructions will be issued to the Magistrates that in future when so required they are to address such warrants to the Constabulary?

\*THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (MR. J. MORLEY, Newcastle-upon-Tyne): As regards the judgments referred to in the question of the hon. Member, I have to observe that in a case of more recent date the Court of Queen's Bench refused to grant a *mandamus* to compel the Magistrates to issue such warrants to the police. It is open to the

collectors to proceed by distress or other process of law, and Government entertain a strong opinion as to the expediency of the police being used for the purpose of collecting public taxes. The collectors are paid a poundage for the collection, and it is obviously right in principle that they who are primarily responsible, and are paid for the work, should incur the burden of executing the warrants.

#### THE EDENDERRY LAND APPEALS.

**MR. KENNEDY (Kildare, N.) :** I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland when an Irish Land Sub-Commission last held a sitting in the Edenderry Union ; and when they intend doing so again ?

\***MR. J. MORLEY :** The last sitting was in January, 1892, and the Land Commission expect to hold another Court in the course of the next few months.

#### CONDITIONS OF GOVERNMENT CONTRACTS.

**MR. FIELD (Dublin, St. Patrick's) :** I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether the Board of Works in Dublin will require contractors to comply with and adhere to the terms of the House of Commons Resolution, to pay fair wages, work regular hours, and employ legitimate labour ?

\***SIR J. T. HIBBERT :** As I stated, in answer to a similar question by the hon. Member on the 21st instant, the Board of Works provide in all their contracts for compliance with the terms of the Resolution of the 13th February, 1891.

#### IRISH MAIL IRREGULARITIES.

**MR. MACARTNEY (Antrim, S.) :** I beg to ask the Postmaster General how often during the three months ending 31st January, 1893, the Irish mail train leaving Euston at 8.20 p.m. has left Crewe at 12 o'clock midnight for Holyhead ; and how often during the same period the postal train leaving Euston at 8.30 p.m. has arrived at Crewe up to time ?

**MR. A. MORLEY :** In answer to the first paragraph, I have to say that the trains in question were not working well during the period referred to. The Irish mail train leaving Euston at 8.20 p.m. left Crewe at 12 o'clock midnight for Holyhead only five times during the three months. On 57 occasions, however,

during the same period it left within 10 minutes of the appointed time. In answer to the second paragraph, the down special mail train reached Crewe at the appointed time on three occasions only during the period, but on 61 occasions the train arrived within 10 minutes of the time. The period specified happens to be the one during which the weather is most unfavourable for railway service, and the delay indicated was largely due to unavoidable causes.

**MR. T. M. HEALY :** Will the right hon. Gentleman undertake to look into this matter at some other period ? Our experience is that the delays are constant and not confined to a particular season.

**MR. A. MORLEY :** I am in communication with the Company on the subject.

**MR. MACARTNEY :** I shall call attention to the matter on another occasion.

#### THE CASE OF WILLIAM CALLAGHAN.

**MR. MAINS (Donegal, N.) :** I beg to ask the Secretary to the Board of Trade if he would state the grounds on which the Board have declined to act upon the recommendation of the Irish Lights Board, and grant William Callaghan, light keeper, full pension upon his services from 1848 ; whether the full pension has been granted in other cases quite similar ; and whether his case will be reconsidered ?

**MR. BURT :** Although William Callaghan was employed by the Irish Lights Board as a painter previous to 1859, it was only in that year that he entered the permanent service of the Commissioners as assistant light-keeper and became entitled to pension. There are, I believe, some cases in which temporary service under the Irish Lights Board has been allowed to count for pension, but the fact that the service was of a temporary character was not within the knowledge of the Board of Trade when such pensions were being considered.

#### INDIAN POLICE ASSISTANT INSPECTORSHIPS.

**SIR SEYMOUR KING :** I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India whether it is to be understood that the candidates, who are called for by the Secretary of State's announcement that

*Mr. J. Morley*

10 appointments to Assistant Inspectorships in the Indian Police will be filled up by open competition in June next, will be treated on the same footing as regards pay, pension, and furlough as men who are to be appointed in India by the Local Governments; how many of the latter it is intended to appoint; and whether the latter are to be Europeans, and are to pass any special examination before appointment in the subjects required by the notice issued by the Civil Service Commissioners; and, if not, why it is necessary that candidates from this country should pass examinations in literary and scientific subjects while others are selected in India by nomination?

\*MR. GEORGE RUSSELL: The candidates recruited in this country will be on the same footing as to pension and furlough as those recruited in India; their pay will be substantially similar, but at present the salaries of the latter vary in the different Provinces. The number of candidates to be nominated in India by the Local Governments will be fixed from time to time according to the requirements of the Service, and as yet the Secretary of State has no information as to the number to be thus appointed in any given year. They will have to pass a strict educational test, but the subjects of examination are not known in this country. The system of open competition for the recruitment in this country has been adopted, after careful consideration, and on the recommendation of the Government of India, as the best in the interest of the Public Service.

#### THE CHAIRMAN OF THE SCOTCH FISHERY BOARD.

SIR HERBERT MAXWELL (Wigton): I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland whether his attention has been called to a letter signed Frank S. Russell, which appeared in *The Times* of 14th February containing a grave charge against the Chairman of the Scottish Fishery Board; whether he is aware that this charge was explicitly made in leading articles in *The Scotsman* newspaper of 16th and 20th December, 1892, and has never been contradicted by that gentleman; and whether it is intended to take proceedings against the publishers of *The Scotsman*, or Colonel Russell, or both, for promulgating a defamatory

libel against a public official; or in any other way to establish the falsehood of the charges publicly made against his good faith?

THE SECRETARY FOR SCOTLAND (Sir G. TREVELYAN, Glasgow, Bridgeton): My attention was attracted by the charge made against the Chairman of the Fishery Board in a letter signed Frank S. Russell. That charge consisted in the allegation that at a meeting of the Fishery Board the Chairman had supported a certain view with regard to a question before the Board relating to trawling in the Moray Firth. Mr. Russell made his allegation on the authority of a member of the Board. The Fishery Board, like all other similarly constituted administrative bodies, holds its meetings in private, and all that passes there is confidential except the ultimate decision at which the Board arrive. For a member of the Fishery Board to bring before the public what he states to have passed at the Board with the object of casting on a colleague a reflection, whether that colleague is the Chairman or not, is neither more or less in accordance with the rules observed in public business and public life than if a member of the Board of Admiralty was to give his version of what passed in the confidence and privacy of the Board-room in order to attack a colleague. The allegation which Mr. Esslemont has denied—a denial which, as far as I am concerned, is absolutely conclusive—should never have been made; and that is all I have to say about it.

SIR HERBERT MAXWELL: Will the right hon. Gentleman answer the last paragraph of the question?

SIR G. TREVELYAN: In my opinion it ought not to have been put. The hon. Member has been connected with the Treasury, and knows the rules, customs, and proprieties attending the transaction of Public Business.

\*MR. HOZIER (Lanarkshire, S.): Will the right hon. Gentleman make a searching inquiry as to how this matter came out?

MR. DALZIEL (Kirkcaldy, &c.): Can the right hon. Gentleman say whether the Frank Russell referred to in the question is the Russell whom Mr. Esslemont severely defeated at the last General Election?

SIR G. TREVELYAN: I have reason to believe that it is.

#### HURST CASTLE GARRISON.

MR. JEFFREYS (Hants, Basingstoke): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether representations have been made from time to time to the War Office by the Commander-in-Chief at Portsmouth, as well as by the Chaplain and others at Hurst Castle, as to the absence of any proper place for holding divine service at that port for the garrison and coastguardsmen; and whether it is his intention to provide this necessary accommodation during the present year?

\*MR. WOODALL: The case has been represented, but considering the pressing requirements of larger stations it has not been possible to provide funds for the service.

#### COMMERCIAL TREATY WITH SPAIN.

MR. THORBURN (Peebles and Selkirk): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs if he can give any information as to the prospects of a Commercial Treaty being arranged between this country and Spain?

\*MR. GEORGE RUSSELL: My hon. Friend has asked me to answer this question. Official negotiations have not yet been commenced, but we understand that the Spanish Government will be prepared to take up commercial negotiations when the Cortes meet in April. In the meanwhile, British trade enjoys most favoured nation treatment in Spain.

#### GIBRALTAR SANITARY BOARD.

CAPTAIN NORTON (Newington, W.): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies what action has been taken by the Colonial Office in connection with the Petition of the Gibraltar ratepayers in reference to the Amended Ordinance constituting a new Sanitary Board for the Colony?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES (MR. S. BUXTON, Tower Hamlets, Poplar): My hon. Friend is aware that in dealing with this question Her Majesty's Government cannot put out of consideration the fact of the peculiar position of Gibraltar as an important military fortress and coal-

ing station. But they have anxiously considered how far they could meet the views of the ratepayers in the matter of the Sanitary Board, and have now decided as follows:—To restore to the Grand Jury the privilege of nominating the panel from which the unofficial Commissioners are to be chosen; to allow the Board the right of nominating their own Chairman; to separate the offices of colonial engineer and engineer to the Sanitary Board, and to allow the Commissioners to appoint their own engineer; to abolish the power of the Governor in vetoing the construction of a work by the Board, and of requiring the Board to defray from the rates the cost of public works not executed by the Commissioners. Further, in future, the Colonial Secretary will cease to be a member of the Board. A Draft Ordinance embodying these concessions has been published in Gibraltar in the usual course, preparatory to its becoming law on March 10. In view of these substantial concessions, Her Majesty's Government feel justified in expecting that the representatives of the ratepayers will cordially co-operate in carrying out the important duties entrusted to the Sanitary Board.

#### IRISH PRISON CONTRACTS.

MR. FIELD: I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury will he explain why, notwithstanding that advertisements have been annually issued by the Irish Prisons Board inviting the supply of prison services, certain contracts have for many years been given to the same firm, although other tenders have been handed in; and whether any steps are taken to test the relative merits of the samples?

\*MR. J. MORLEY: The General Prisons Board inform me they are not aware to what contracts reference is made. The firms from whom tenders are accepted vary much from year to year, and in all cases the contracts are decided on their merits. The relative merits of the samples are examined by the Board, aided, where desirable, by Reports from experts and the Governors of Prisons.

#### THE BALTIMORE PIER.

MR. FIELD: I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether he is aware that the late Government pro-

mised to have a new pier built at Baltimore; whether the present Government will allow the most successful mackerel fishery in Ireland to be injured by the want of such a pier; and whether the railway will be finished in time to be utilised for the spring fishing?

\*SIR J. T. HIBBERT: The late Government, so far as I can ascertain, made no such promise, and I have already explained that there are no funds available under the Fishery Piers Acts for building a new pier. I have also stated already that the railway is expected to be available for fish traffic in time for the opening of the fishery season at the end of March.

MR. FIELD: Is it not a fact the Congested Districts Board promised the pier should be erected?

SIR J. T. HIBBERT: I can find no such promise in any Papers at the Treasury.

MR. JOHNSTON (Belfast, S.): Will the right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury say if this question is one which might be hopefully left to the proposed Irish Legislature?

[No answer was given.]

#### SCOTCH TEACHERS PENSIONS.

MR. HOZIER: I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland whether he has made arrangements with the Treasury to secure for the teachers in the public elementary schools in Scotland all the advantages in the matter of provision for old age or ill-health which may accrue to the teachers in England and Wales from the Resolution of the House of last Friday?

SIR G. TREVELYAN: In the event of any legislation being proposed upon the lines of the Resolution carried on the 24th February, the interests of Scotland will undoubtedly be kept in view.

#### THE UNIVERSITY OF WALES.

MR. KENYON (Denbigh, N.): I beg to ask the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education what steps, if any, he has taken to place the Draft Charter to constitute the University of Wales before the President of the Committee of Council on Education; and whether he can give any assurance to the House as to the date when the proposition will be entertained?

THE VICE PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL (MR. A. H. D. ACLAND, York, W.R., Rotherham): There has been no Petition presented to the Queen in Council for the grant of a Charter to constitute the University of Wales, so that no assurance on this subject can be given at present.

#### CORN AVERAGES.

MR. BROOKFIELD (Sussex, Rye): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade what is the method at present observed for officially ascertaining the average price of British wheat; and whether, in determining the average price, any special precautions are taken against including sales of foreign wheat in the calculation?

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF AGRICULTURE (MR. H. GARDNER, Essex, Saffron Walden): The method by which the average price of British corn is obtained is fully explained in the official evidence given to the Select Committee on Corn Averages in 1888, and to the Select Committee on Corn Sales last year, to which evidence the hon. Member will perhaps allow me to refer him. It would be difficult to explain the method satisfactorily within the limits of an answer to a question. It is a mis-demeanour to include in any Return corn which is not British corn, and the attention of the Inspectors is specially called to the fact.

#### BOGUS CLUBS.

MR. FIELD: I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether it is the intention of the Government to introduce a Bill this Session dealing with bogus clubs, which are mainly utilised for drinking purposes during illegal hours, but are not subject to supervisions nor penalties?

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (SIR W. HARCOURT, Derby): My right hon. Friend has asked me to answer this question. As I said the other night, this is a question which it is very necessary to deal with. Whether or not it will be possible to legislate on the subject this Session I cannot at present say.



BENEFICES IN THE DIOCESE OF ST.  
ASAPH.

MR. KENYON : I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury if he will consent to the Return, which appears on the Notice Paper of to-day, as to the nett value of Benefices in the Diocese of St. Asaph ?

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. W. E. GLADSTONE, Edinburgh, Midlothian) : I do not quite understand why if Returns are made of the income or value of benefices in Wales this Return should be limited to St. Asaph. The case of the four dioceses is precisely parallel. But I have also to say that there is no Department of the Government which could undertake to supply the Return in the terms the hon. Member asks for. The gross value can be given, but the effect of depressing circumstances upon the incomes of the clergy, and the alterations are not within the cognisance of any Department of the Government, and I am afraid that I could not undertake to supply them.

## THE HOME RULE BILL.

MR. CARSON (Dublin University) : I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether under the provisions of the Government of Ireland Bill it is intended to prohibit the Judges of the High Court in Ireland, in actions heard before them, from determining whether any Irish Act or any provision thereof is beyond the powers of the Irish Legislature ; and whether the said Judges would under the said Bill be bound to give effect to any such Act or provision, although it is in their opinion *ultra vires* ?

MR. W. E. GLADSTONE : The question put to me by the hon. and learned Gentleman includes two perfectly distinct inquiries. The answer to each of them is simply a brief "No."

MR. T. M. HEALY : I wish to ask you, Mr. Speaker, whether your attention has been directed to the constant series of questions with regard to the Home Rule Bill, and whether it has not been the practice of the Chair in the past to discountenance questions as to the effect of any particular clause or any particular proposal in a Bill which has yet to come up for discussion in Committee ?

MR. SPEAKER : I am not cognizant of any such rule having been laid down. But after what happened the other day, on the reply of a Minister, I feel my hands strengthened in declining to allow questions to be put on the Paper which refer to the details of a coming Bill.

MR. JOHNSTON : In consequence of that decision of the Chair, may I ask if the Prime Minister will postpone the Second Reading of the Bill till the country has had an opportunity of considering it ?

MR. W. E. GLADSTONE : I shall avail myself again of the brief but effective monosyllable which I just now used in my reply to the hon. and learned Member for the Dublin University, "No."

## FOOT-AND-MOUTH DISEASE IN SUSSEX.

MR. FELLOWES (Hants, Ramsey) : I wish to ask the President of the Board of Agriculture if it is a fact that on or about February 18 the veterinary adviser of the Board of Agriculture inspected some animals on a farm near Hastings and decided that they were suffering from foot-and-mouth disease, and whether the same animals are still alive ?

MR. GARDNER : Yes, Sir, the facts are as stated in the question. I may add that it frequently happens that the slaughter of animals affected with foot-and-mouth disease is attended with greater risk of spreading the disease than the keeping of them alive under strict observation and in perfect isolation. I came to the conclusion that this would have been the case in the present instance.

MR. CHAPLIN (Lincolnshire, Sleaford) : May I ask whether the right hon. Gentleman's remark does not apply to a strictly limited number of cases ? I will also ask what steps have been taken to prevent the spread of the disease, and whether the Board are able in any way to account for the origin of the outbreak ?

MR. GARDNER : It has not been the uniform practice of the Board to slaughter and compensate in all cases of foot-and-mouth disease. We have no information at the present moment as to the origin of this outbreak. Every precaution possible to be taken has been taken on this occasion, and we have great hopes of being able to prevent the disease from spreading.

**SIR R. PAGET** (Somerset, Wells): Are we to understand from that reply it is the opinion of the Board of Agriculture that it would be a greater danger to the country to slaughter these animals than to keep them alive?

**MR. GARDNER**: Under certain circumstances. In this instance the animals are strictly isolated, and there would be a greater danger to the surrounding country through the slaughterer carrying the disease away from the building than there would be from keeping the animals alive.

**SIR R. PAGET**: How does it occur that there is a greater danger attending the entrance of the slaughterer than of the Veterinary Inspector of the Board of Agriculture?

**MR. GARDNER**: Those who go to these buildings at the present moment are strictly limited, and no one is allowed to enter except in special dress.

**SIR R. PAGET**: Could the slaughterer not wear that dress?

[No answer was given.]

**MR. JAMES LOWTHER** (Kent, Thanet): Is it not the case that a further outbreak took place on the premises referred to, subsequent to the visit of the Inspector?

**MR. GARDNER**: It is perfectly true that there were animals on the premises which subsequently became affected.

**MR. J. LOWTHER**: Did the further outbreak not occur in a separate yard?

**MR. GARDNER**: No; in the same yard.

**MR. J. LOWTHER**: My information does not agree with that.

**MR. FELLOWES**: May I ask whether the time of year is not approaching when it is absolutely necessary that the farmers should have open markets, and whether, therefore, when an outbreak occurs the right hon. Gentleman will order the immediate slaughter of the animals?

**MR. GARDNER**: The order for immediate slaughter has nothing to do with the opening of the markets.

## MOTIONS.

### INTERNATIONAL MONETARY CONFERENCE.

#### RESOLUTION.

**SIR H. MEYSEY-THOMPSON** (Stafford, Handsworth): My object in rising to-night is to call attention to the International Monetary Conference recently held at Brussels, and to move the Resolution:—

"That in view of the growing divergence of value between gold and silver, and the serious evils resulting therefrom, this House urges Her Majesty's Government to use its utmost influence to procure the re-assembly of the Monetary Conference, and to impress upon our representatives the immediate necessity of finding some effective remedy in concert with other nations."

Now, Sir, I wish to say at once that though I am a bimetallist, yet neither I, nor, I think, any of those who are acting with us on this occasion wish to assert that bimetallism is the only remedy for the evils of which we complain. Personally, I took up this monetary question as an entirely practical one. In February, 1874, just 19 years ago, I was elected a Director of the North-Eastern Railway Company; and everyone knows what terrible depression and disaster fell in the years following 1874 on the great trades and industries of the North-East of England. Not only the iron and coal and engineering, but also the woollen and worsted and linen trades, suffered great misfortunes; and it was in endeavouring to find out the reason for these misfortunes, that I came to the conclusion that scarcity of gold and demonetization of silver were the chief causes of this depression, and that International bimetallism would be the most effectual remedy. Still, we are perfectly ready to consider any other plans that may be proposed, though we do not consider that up to this time any plan has been discovered which can in any way compare with bimetallism. Now, Sir, the question is not, and ought never to become, a Party one. The Resolution to-day is moved by a Liberal-Unionist, it is seconded by a supporter of the Prime Minister, a hostile Amendment is moved by another Liberal-Unionist and seconded by a Conservative, so that it is in no sense a Party

question ; and in any remarks I may have to address to Her Majesty's Ministers, I wish it to be understood that they are merely addressed to them not as the leaders of any particular Political Party, but because they happen to be for the time being the persons responsible for the action of England with regard to a re-assembly of the Conference, for the selection of the individuals who are to represent us at the Conference, and for the instructions given to those individuals. Then, Sir, I must say one word about bimetallism and protection. We have been accused of protection, I suppose on the principle of giving a dog a bad name. Bimetallism is not, and cannot be, in any way connected with protection, because in its very essence it is contrary to, and the exact opposite of, protection. Bimetallism means equality, protection means inequality. What do you mean when you talk of protection in an economic sense ? You mean protecting a man against his competitors by making the law unequal : either you give him a bonus which you do not give the others, or you impose a duty on his competitors which is not imposed upon him ; the inequality of the law is the only thing which gives him protection. Now, Sir, what is the meaning of international bimetallism ? It means that every man, woman, and child throughout the world would have not only equal, but exactly the same laws with regard to gold and silver money. We wish to see power given to every man, woman, and child in the world to take gold and silver to their Mint and to have it coined into legal tender money. How can absolutely equal and identical laws give protection, when the only meaning of protection is inequality ? If absolute equality of treatment would be any benefit to English producers, this proves conclusively that they are treated unfairly and unequally now. It is, as our Friend the Member for Woodbridge Division of Suffolk said the other day, the case of the wolf and the lamb ; we ask for absolute equality, and we are told, with sublime disregard of the truth, that we are wicked people, who are asking for protection, which means inequality. But, Sir, though bimetallism does not, and cannot, mean protection, yet the present system of gold monometallism induces other nations to increase or maintain high duties against us. And it does this in two

distinct ways : first, the scarcity of gold and consequent fall in prices has made the Continental nations add continually to their Customs Duties, so as to keep off foreign competition, and protect their producers as much as possible from the effect of the fall in prices ; and, secondly, it has induced them to keep up or increase their duties in order to protect their stock of gold. Professor Andrews, one of the Representatives of the United States at the Monetary Conference, said in his speech—

"We produce several commodities which Europe must have, while few of our own wants are of such a nature that we cannot by sufficient outlay provide for them at home. By hindering somewhat the movement of your commodities to us, which many of us are sorry to have to do, we make it necessary for you to send us gold. It is obvious from this that there could be no surer way to lower American tariffs than for Europe and America to agree upon a policy favourable to silver as money. That, and nothing else, will abate this incessant conflict for gold, leaving America free to effect generous reductions in her Customs Duties."

It is, therefore, evident that the result of our present system is to keep up or raise hostile tariffs on the part of both Europe and America. Now, Sir, with regard to the Conference, although the facts are well-known to most Members of the House, yet as several hon. Gentlemen have told me that they have not studied the subject at all, and are anxious that I should begin at the beginning, I will in a very few sentences recall the circumstances which led the principal monetary nations of the world to believe that it was necessary that a Conference should be held, and that an earnest endeavour should be made to discover some means of escape from the evils which the present unfortunate monetary arrangements of the world have already brought upon us, and, if possible, by some International agreement, to ward off the infinitely more serious evils and dangers with which we are threatened if no International agreement can be arrived at. Now, I think that everyone will agree that while the years from 1853 to 1873 were years of unexampled progress and prosperity, the years between 1873 and 1893 have been chiefly characterised by stagnation and depression. The world has not absolutely stood still in commercial matters : how could it do so with the great increase of population in the United Kingdom, and throughout the British Empire,

Canada, India, Australasia, and throughout the world generally? But the rate of increase has been much more slow, trade has been exceedingly unprofitable, and has ruined almost as many people as it has enriched, while in some of our greatest industries, such as iron and steel and engineering, the cotton and woollen and linen, the agricultural, which is the largest of all, and many other industries, the periods of prosperity have been so few, and the periods of depression so many, that the average profit has become exceedingly low, the employment of labour exceedingly intermittent and precarious, and the position so serious, that it has become a national misfortune. This has not only affected this country but many others, so that there is a general feeling of *malaise*, of impending disaster, a growing conviction that there must be causes at work more deep-rooted and serious than the ordinary fluctuations of trade. And, Sir, there is a widespread and growing belief that the root of the evil is in the continually increasing scarcity of gold in proportion to the wants of commerce and of the world, and the dislocation of the relative value of gold and silver in consequence of the mistaken legislation of the last 20 years. The belief is gaining ground that law must undo what law has done, and that it is only by retracing our steps, and returning to a state of things similar to what prevailed before 1873, that we can hope to find a solution of the difficulty. The population of the world is estimated at about 15,000,000,000, and the population of the nations which use silver for their money is over 800,000,000. Our trade with silver-using countries is enormous, and every item of that trade is carried on by means of an exchange between gold money and silver money. The relation of gold to silver, and the stability of that relationship is of the utmost importance to our trade with silver-using countries, and it is evident that as the European nations gradually shut out our productions by their protective tariffs, it is to our trade with silver-using countries to which we shall have to look more and more for an outlet for our manufactures, and for the support of our wage-earning population; and this is the answer to a very foolish question, and it is one which has been addressed to me scores of times. Why wish to use

silver as money and not some other metal such as pig iron? The answer is that there happen to be between 800,000,000 and 900,000,000 of people in the world using silver as their standard money, and there are no nations or people using pig iron as standard money or any other metal than silver and gold. Now, Sir, for an enormous number of years—Mr. Max Müller says since the 8th century B.C., for certain—the nations of the world have not only used gold and silver money, but they have always found it necessary to fix some ratio of value between gold and silver; that is to say, that if a man had to pay a debt, he should be able to pay that debt either by a certain weight of gold, or by a fixed multiple of that weight in silver. The result of that was to keep the commercial value of gold and silver extremely steady with relation to each other. Between the years 1687 and 1873 the highest value of gold compared with silver was 16·25 in 1813, and the lowest value of gold was 14·14 in 1760. In other words, during nearly 200 years an ounce of gold would never exchange for more than 16·25 ounces of silver, or for less than 14·14 ounces of silver. Now, this is a very extraordinary thing, considering that during that time at some periods the annual production of gold from the mines was four times that of silver, and at others the annual production of silver was three times that of gold. It shows, to my mind, conclusively that the commercial value of silver and gold was governed by the fact of their being in all-important countries rated by law to each other (that is to say, a legal tender in certain fixed proportions of weight), and that as long as gold and silver are both actively in circulation as money, the legal ratio will govern the market ratio if they are again rated to each other in all the principal countries of the world. Unfortunately, in 1873, though the monetary system of the world was working extremely well, and the world was extremely prosperous, a new departure was taken, and an entirely new experiment, never before tried in the history of the world, was entered upon. And this experiment was not entered upon deliberately and of set purpose; it came about, as it were, by chance and accident. The Parliaments of the world would never, I believe,

have been persuaded to make such a change; but it came about by a train of accidents, and the world found itself launched upon an absolutely new and untried experiment before it had realised what was going on. Germany, I believe it is admitted now, made the change in her currency without sufficient consideration, and without clearly foreseeing the consequences which would follow. France thought herself absolutely compelled by the action of Germany to close her Mints to silver and join in the scramble for gold. The United States demonetised silver at a time when neither silver nor gold were being used as currency in that country, by a few words slipped, intentionally or accidentally, into an Act of Congress, without the vast majority of the population having the slightest idea of what was being done. The effect was instantaneous: the link between gold and silver which had existed by law for hundreds of years in the various nations was broken for the first time, and the scramble for gold began. The value of silver did not fall, as is shown by the fact that prices have remained steady in silver-using countries; but the value of gold has gone up enormously in proportion to silver, and to the average of all other commodities. Between 1687 and 1872 the highest amount of silver which had to be given to obtain an ounce of gold was 16·25 ounces, and the lowest 14·14 ounces, but directly the link between gold and silver was broken, and the consequent scramble for gold began, the amount of silver you had to give to buy gold increased year by year as gold got scarcer and scarcer. In 1875 you had to give 16·59 ounces of silver for one ounce of gold; in 1880, 18·05; in 1885, 19·41; in 1890, 19·76; and in 1892, 23·52. Now, Sir, it is this experiment, begun in 1873, which we metallurgists deplore, which we say was one of the greatest mistakes that the human race ever committed, and to which we trace a very large part of the depression in trade and agriculture from which we are suffering. And as I wish to treat this matter in as practical a manner as possible, I will now lay before the House as clearly and distinctly as I can the exact way in which we think it has done harm, and exactly what it is we complain of. In the first place, we say that by the boycotting of silver, gold

has been rendered artificially scarce in gold-using countries, prices have been artificially depressed, and the law has practically taken money out of the pockets of debtors and made a present of it to creditors. Secondly, we say that as many of the evil effects of this experiment have been felt in gold-using countries alone, and not in silver-using countries, the result has been in the past, and will be very much more in the future, to put an end to agricultural and manufacturing production in gold-using countries such as England, and to compel these industries to be carried on in countries which use silver, such as India and China and Mexico. Thirdly, we say that the rapidly-increasing divergence between the value of gold and silver is getting us into the most serious difficulties with regard to the government and taxation of India. Now, Sir, with regard to the first of these propositions, I suppose no one will now deny that gold has appreciated—that is to say, that gold will buy more of the average products of the world than it would 25 years ago. The figures collected by the *Economist* newspaper, and those collected by Mr. Sauerbeck, show that whereas in the average of the years 1865 to 1870 a certain amount of a number of leading commodities would, on the average, exchange for 100 sovereigns, exactly the same amount of those commodities would only exchange for 66 sovereigns in October, 1892; that is to say, when a man takes his wheat, or his wool, or his iron, or his cotton goods to market, instead of receiving £100, he only receives £66; and if he wants to get £100, he has to buy another £34 by giving 50 per cent. more, or half as much again, of his goods, as he would have had to do between 1865 and 1869. And what has been the result to debtors; and who are the debtors? The debtors are the bees in the social hive, the manufacturing, the agricultural classes, the producers generally. We all know what has happened to agriculturists; everyone knows in a general way that agriculture has been suffering terribly; but this state of things is not by any means confined to agriculturists; thousands of shopkeepers, and of men with small—aye, even with large—businesses of various kinds have been slowly ruined during the last 20

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years through no fault of their own, on account of no miscalculation as to their own business, but solely on account of the cruel, relentless grinding of the appreciation of gold, and because they have to pay more and more of their produce every year to meet their fixed charges and the interest on their borrowed money. When prices are steady, everyone gets fair play; but what do you think of a country whose laws deliberately deny fair play, whose laws deliberately load the dice against the financially weak, who are debtors, in favour of the financially strong who are creditors, and deliberately push those who are trembling on the brink, and who might have recovered themselves, over into the abyss of bankruptcy? And this, Sir, is what I most earnestly believe is being done by the Monetary Laws of England and Europe at the present moment, and for this state of things England, and England alone, is responsible. She is not responsible for the laws of other nations; but she is responsible in this way: that they believe that they cannot alter the present system without the concurrence of England. At former Conferences they have asked us to join them in changing this unjust system, and we have refused. At the present Conference they were willing to change if England would consent, but England, and England alone, stops the way. But, Sir, I am quite expecting that during the course of the present Debate some hon. Member will get up and say that England would be very foolish to change her system because we gain certain advantages by it. And he will very probably instance India. He can point out with great truth that the Indian Government has to pay some £15,000,000 in gold to England annually. This £15,000,000 is not sent in gold; it is sent in produce. Now, the fall in gold prices has this effect: that to get £15,000,000 in gold you have to give 50 per cent. more produce than you would have had to give 25 years ago in 1865-1869, so that we get for £15,000,000 as much produce as would cost £22,500,000, if gold prices had not fallen. Now, it may be very pleasant for England to force India to pay her every year 50 per cent. more tea and cotton and indigo and wheat and other products than she would do otherwise, but how about India? We are very fond of

talking about our ruling India for the good of the inhabitants of India, and that we do not do it for our own benefit; and yet here is India crying out in vain about the evils of the present monetary system. You have the officials of India practically unanimous in favour of bimetallism; you see that the taxation of India has to be increased year by year in order to provide more and more produce to be sent to England in payment of her gold charges, and our answer to India is, No, we are getting practically £7,500,000 of produce from you for nothing, and we will not make any change. And then we wonder and are indignant when foreign countries talk of the selfishness of England. And then, Sir, I have no doubt some other hon. Member will point out—for it is one of the stock arguments of our opponents—that England would be foolish to change her system because she is a creditor country. What does that mean? It means that certain individuals of this country have lent money to foreign countries, and that the interest on this money has to be paid in gold in London; it means also that gold having appreciated, these foreign Governments and individuals have to sell 50 per cent. more produce in order to buy this gold, and that the individuals who receive the gold have 50 per cent. more command over the average products of the world than they would have had if gold had not appreciated. They are not only getting their pound of flesh out of their debtors, but they are getting a pound and a half; and as gold continues to appreciate, they hope soon to receive two pounds of flesh instead of one. Well, Sir, this may be good for certain individuals in England, but at what cost is it done? Now, I believe that one of the great arguments against Protection was that in placing a duty upon wheat you not only raised the price of the wheat which came from abroad, but you also raised the price of all the wheat produced in this country. Well, Sir, the same thing applies here. If you maintain laws which enable the creditor in England to extract a pound and a half of flesh, 50 per cent. more produce from debtors abroad, you are obliged at the same time to allow every creditor to extract also a pound and a half of flesh, 50 per cent. more produce from every

debtor in the United Kingdom. You cannot limit the loss to one class of debtors and spare the others. If we are to make merry over the advantages we are gaining over our foreign debtors by making them pay more produce every year to obtain the sovereigns they have to pay certain individuals in England, we must be ready to make merry also over the sufferings of debtors in the United Kingdom who have to pay every year a larger proportion of their produce to other individuals in this country. And we must never forget that this is not an evil which has happened once for all, and is done with. It will probably grow and increase day by day, month by month, year by year, as gold gets gradually scarcer in proportion to the wants of the world, and prices, though no doubt they will fluctuate somewhat for the moment, must tend steadily downwards. And why not face this question at once? You must face it soon, as the growing population of the world will very soon require all the gold produced annually for industrial purposes—wedding-rings and bracelets and gilding and other industrial wants. But if you consider this appreciation of gold as an advantage, then why stop half way? You have closed the Mints of Europe to silver; close them to gold also, and issue no more bank-notes. You will soon have prices as low as they were when there was little money in the world, labour at sixpence a day, and all prices a fifth of what they are now. Unfortunately, time is getting on, otherwise I should have liked to have gone into the question of young professional men, and to have pointed out to them how very detrimental to their prospects in life are times of scarcity of money and falling prices. All history and experience shows us that in times of increasing money and rising prices, the world has made great steps forward, there has been great prosperity and many new openings for young men, lawyers, or doctors, or engineers, for those connected with the Press, or whatever their line of life may be; but history also shows us that in times of falling prices enterprise has languished and openings have been very few. And now, Sir, I come to the second of the propositions which I wish to establish—namely, that our present monetary system tends to put an end to

agricultural and manufacturing production in gold-using countries like England, and to force silver-using countries like China, Mexico, and India to manufacture for themselves very many of the great articles of consumption, which we have been in the habit of manufacturing for them. Let us take first the case of agricultural produce. The case was stated very clearly by a merchant some time ago. Of course, I am only quoting from memory, and not giving his exact words, but the substance of what he said was this: A merchant in India writes to me and says, "I will send you so many thousand quarters of wheat if you will give me the same price in rupees as you did last time." At first sight this appears to me impossible, for the price of wheat in Liverpool has fallen from 40s. to 30s. "But," he said, "I think a little longer, and I see that I cannot only send him the same price as before, but I could really afford to give him even more, and for this reason: The price of silver has fallen even more than that of wheat, so that the sovereign and a half I get for the wheat at Liverpool will buy more rupees than the two sovereigns did before. It makes no difference to the Indian producer what the gold price of wheat is. All that matters to him is the number of rupees he gets in exchange for it. He has nothing to do with gold money; he has probably never seen a gold piece in his life. All his expenses of every kind—rent, rates, taxes, labour, railway rates—are paid in silver, so that if the gold price of wheat falls to 10s. a quarter, it will make no difference to the Indian producer as long as silver falls in the same proportion; and, of course, the same is true of any other grains, wool, hides, tallow, or any other form of agricultural produce which can be grown in silver-using countries. Then," he said, "look at the case of cotton. A merchant in Bombay writes to me and says that he will buy so many thousand yards of cotton goods if I will take the same price in rupees as I did formerly. Well, I try to do so; I beat down the price of the manufacturers in Lancashire, and until silver fell too much the difficulty was met by the price of cotton goods being reduced, but now the price of silver has fallen so low that we seem to be coming to a dead-lock. Prices in India have not changed; the

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people when they sell their goods receive no more rupees than they did before, and therefore they cannot afford to give more rupees for our manufactures." He said, "These rupees exchange for very many fewer sovereigns, and so what is to be done? The English cotton manufacturer cannot reduce his price any lower; profit has almost entirely disappeared, rates and taxes tend to increase, the interest on borrowed money cannot be reduced; wages will, of course, eventually have to come down, but this cannot be done without a severe struggle. How is this dead-lock to end?" Now, Sir, the hon. Member for Flintshire told us in a speech shortly afterwards what the issue from the dead-lock was: He said, "Eighteen cotton mills are at this moment being erected in Bombay, and two in England." This, Sir, must be the inevitable result, not only in cotton, but in jute, in linen, in woollens and worsteds, in machinery, and most of the things we export to silver-using countries. They cannot afford to pay any more rupees for these articles; these rupees buy fewer sovereigns, and our manufacturers cannot afford to take fewer sovereigns for their produce. They will, therefore, be compelled to manufacture all these things for themselves. This process has already begun, and will, of course, be enormously accelerated if the Americans cease their purchases of silver, and if we see silver, as we are told it very likely will do, fall to something like half its present value. I should like to read to you a few words from a statement laid before the Monetary Conference by the Official Representatives of Mexico. In that they point out that the practical effect of the fall in the value of silver has been that it has proved more profitable to that country to cease to export a great deal of the silver they used to export in payment for their imports—to keep the silver at home and to use it as capital in manufacturing articles for themselves which they used to buy in European countries, and of course very largely from ourselves. They say—

"But if silver remains in Mexico in larger quantities than it has hitherto done, productive employment for it must, perforce, be found. Agriculture will certainly be developed, but, considering the special circumstances of the country, we think that industrial work will be preferred. The production of our own manufactures will cause a proportional diminution

in the consumption of European manufactures, and will in time end by completely superseding some of them. This consequence of the increase in the currency of Mexico is already beginning to be realised. For a long time we have had, if not many, yet very important manufactures of cotton and woollen fabrics, of paper, &c., and their number has been increasing the last few years. Last October a manufactory of cotton fabrics of all sorts was opened at Rio Blanco, near Orizava, on the Mexican and Vera Cruz Railway, the importance of which may be estimated by its having cost already about 5,000,000 piastres—that is to say, £1,000,000. Besides this noteworthy example, we often find in our newspapers accounts of the establishment of new manufactures of various kinds; of metal foundries, some of them on a large scale, of manufactories of soap, of Portland cement, and of many other articles."

I should like also to call your attention to a speech made by Mr. Allard, many years Master of the Brussels Mint, whose knowledge and authority on the currency question are universally admitted. He is referring to the case of Italy, and he points out how the depreciation of the currency of Italy as compared with that of the gold-using countries led to a very large development of her manufacturing industries. He says—

"In Italy, exchange was at one time at 25 per cent. below par, and silver and drafts upon Paris used to be at a premium; and has she not become an industrial country? Thanks to that premium of 25 per cent. she has set about producing more, and has sent us her products. Her commodities received a premium of 25 per cent., and thus she became a manufacturing State; and again, it was the creditor nations to whom she was obliged to pay in gold that have felt the unfortunate consequences."

Now, Sir, I am informed that the exchange difficulty is interfering seriously with the export of jewellery, with the export of saddlery and leather, and with very many others of our industrial products. We know that it is interfering very largely indeed with the investment of capital in silver-using countries. If it were not for this difficulty many railways would now be in course of construction which would give great employment to our civil and mechanical engineers, to our contractors, to our locomotive, waggon, and carriage building and rail trades, and I can assure you, Sir, as a Director of one of the largest steel-works in England, that we are in very great want of all the trade we can get. In China I am told that there is plenty of iron and plenty of coal, and there is a most hardworking and frugal



population of some 400,000,000 souls. They are very slow to begin anything new; but if the present state of things continues, they will be absolutely compelled to produce for themselves a great many things that they now buy from us; and, Sir, I ask, is not this an absolutely suicidal policy to be adopted by England to force China to produce for herself and for other silver-using countries a variety of articles which a large number of our population gain their livelihood now by producing for her here? With one hand we are doing our best to drive the agricultural labourer into the towns to look for work, and with the other hand to drive away the manufacturing industries which give employment to the workmen in towns, and to cause them to be carried on in silver-using countries. And can the workman follow the trades to India? Can he work in manufactories in the climate of India? We know he cannot; and if he could, would he be content with the 3d. or 4d. a day which the Indian labourer finds sufficient to clothe and house and keep him in comfort? And now, Sir, I am anxious to know what is the attitude of Her Majesty's Government with regard to these facts? Do they question them? Do they deny them? Have they any remedy to propose? I can hardly believe that they look upon them with satisfaction, or that they wish that our wheat lands should become prairies and our manufacturing districts deserts. Then, Sir, to come to my third proposition, there is the question of India. What is Her Majesty's Government going to do about India? You must do something; you cannot go on adding indefinitely to the taxation of India as the price of silver falls. The difficulty is this: The Indian Government has to pay annually in England some 15,000,000 sterling in gold and it has no gold to pay with. It receives all its revenues in rupees, and the same number of rupees buy less and less gold every year. The average value in sterling realised by the Indian Government for their rupees during the 10 years 1861 to 1871 was £1 11s. 6d. The highest average rate realised for rupees was 26·02d. in 1859-1860 and 26·035d. in 1860-1861. The lowest price at which the Indian Government have ever sold rupees was in 1892—namely, 14½d., and the average from the 1st January, 1892, to the

1st January, 1893, was 15·3d. Now, the actual amount of gold purchased by the Indian Government in the year 1892 was £16,319,949; and if the rupee had been at 2s., the cost of this sum in rupees would have been 163,199,490 rupees; but the actual cost, owing to the dearness of gold, was 256,170,572 rupees—that is to say, that 92,971,382 more rupees must be raised in taxation from the people of India than would have been necessary if the rupee were at 2s. Even if we take the rupee at 1s. 11½d. the difference is still over 90,000,000 rupees. Now, this increase from R.160,000,000 to R.250,000,000 in round figures is in exactly the same proportion as if on some department of our expenditure in England you had raised our taxation from £16,000,000 to £25,000,000, an increase of £9,000,000 sterling. And it is a real increase to the people of India. Prices have not changed there to any serious extent, so that they have to give more of their produce, in the proportion of 25 to 16, in order to obtain the additional rupees. But, Sir, this is nothing to what we are threatened with in the future. We are told plainly that if this Conference cannot arrive at any decision, the United States will cease purchasing silver, and will enter into the struggle for gold. Now, for the last two years the United States have bought 54,000,000 ounces of silver, at an average cost of about £10,000,000 sterling a-year. Suppose they cease to buy silver, and buy gold instead. They will make silver much more plentiful, and gold much more scarce, and we are told that the rupee is certain to fall to 1s., and would probably fall to 9d. Now, what would be the effect on the finances of India? With the rupee at 1s., of course, the gold they buy would cost exactly double what it would with the rupee at 2s. Therefore, last year the number of rupees required would have been 326,398,980, instead of the 163,199,490 rupees which it would have been with the rupee at 2s., an increase of 163,199,490 rupees. And with the rupee at 9d., the amount required would have been 435,198,640 rupees, or an increase of 271,999,150 rupees. This, Sir, would be equivalent to raising some branch of expenditure in England which had formerly cost £16,000,000 to

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£32,000,000 or to £43,000,000, or an increase of taxation of £16,000,000 or £27,000,000 sterling. Now, Sir, these figures are appalling, and yet no man living can answer for it that if this Conference does not re-assemble the rupee will not fall even lower than 9d. And you would have also to increase the salaries of the servants of the Crown in India, who have already suffered great and unmerited hardship, and whose case already needs consideration, and this means still more taxation. Is this a prospect which Her Majesty's Government regard with satisfaction? Only two practical remedies seem to have been proposed. One is bimetallism, the other is the closing of the Indian Mints to the coinage of rupees. One is a policy of plenty, the other of scarcity; bimetallism by international agreement could be adopted with the greatest ease as far as India is concerned. The Mints of India are already open to the coinage of both gold and silver. You have only to give legal tender to gold at the agreed ratio with silver, to rate gold to the rupee, and the thing is done. You need no interference with the habits of the people; in fact, not one person in a hundred in India would know that any change had been made. This is the policy of plenty. The difficulty has arisen from the scarcity of gold. Relieve the tension on gold by allowing silver to take its place to a certain extent in the reserves of the Banks of Europe, and the scarcity of gold in relation to silver would be relieved. The other policy—the policy of closing the Mint to silver—is the policy of scarcity. By law in Europe we have made gold artificially scarce. Make rupees artificially scarce in India, and you will restore the balance. Instead of relieving Europe from the evils which are pressing upon it, subject India also to the same evils, and then everything is to be all right. Now, this policy might, of course, be effective up to a certain point. The population of India is increasing; and if you forbid the increase of rupees to meet the wants of this population you may create an artificial scarcity of rupees, and thus depress all prices in India. But there are several very grave objections to this plan. We are told on very high authority that if India closes her Mints, and America ceases her purchases of silver, that it will probably not

be long before we see the price of silver at 2s. per ounce. Now, supposing that your plan has been effectual, and that the rupee has regained its exchange value of 1s. 11d., then the value of the silver in the rupee will not be worth more than 10d., while the nominal value of the rupee will be 1s. 11d.; that is to say, with £100 in gold you would only be able to buy 1,044 rupees; but with £100 you could buy silver enough to make 2,400 rupees. What a temptation to the introduction of rupees coined elsewhere! They could be copied exactly, made of exactly the same weight and fineness of silver, and be as good coins in every respect, except that they would not be issued through the Indian Mint. You have an enormous frontier to guard, and it would be extremely difficult to keep out perfectly good rupees, coined elsewhere. Then there is another difficulty, and a very serious one. The habit of the natives of India has been for centuries to turn their savings into ornaments, which are worn round the arms and ankles of their wives and daughters. These are Indian bracelets (exhibiting bracelets). An Indian does not look on these or speak of them as worth so many rupees; he says they are so many rupees. Their custom is to take the actual rupees to the silver-worker; he makes those very rupees into an armlet; the armlet is weighed back to the customer against the exact number of rupees he has handed over; the armlet is put into one scale and the rupees into another, and they have to balance exactly; the customer pays a small sum for the workmanship, and the transaction is complete. Now, from time immemorial this custom has prevailed—the people turn their savings into ornaments, and turn them back into rupees when they want money. So long as the Mints are open, the bracelet is always worth exactly its weight in rupees, minus the 2 per cent. which is the Mint charge for coinage. But if you close your Mints, the value—the enormous value, amounting probably to tens of millions sterling—would be instantly depreciated. Now, Sir, I know something of the difficulty of trying to explain bimetallism to educated people in England, but think of the difficulty of explaining to an Indian ryot that he is not being robbed by this process. Many families must possess among them 100

rupees' worth of these ornaments, scraped painfully together in a country where wages are not more than 3d. or 4d. a day; this is the only reserve of the family, their only money capital handed down from father to son, and not to be touched till some great famine or calamity comes; the only resource of the family against actual starvation—these ornaments have been actually made out of 100 rupees, and no one has ever doubted that they could become 100 rupees again if occasion required. But all of a sudden, in the twinkling of an eye, by the signing of a decree, this 100 rupees' worth of ornaments becomes only worth its weight in uncoined silver, perhaps only worth 40 or 50 rupees. What are you to say to the man? He asks why the decree is signed? You say, "Because gold is scarce in Europe"; but he will reply, "Silver is our currency here; we have nothing to do with gold. Has there been anything the matter with our currency?" You have to confess that the monetary system in India has been working to perfection, as is shown by the fact that prices there have remained steady during the last 20 years. He will say, "Then a large part of my savings is to be destroyed because of monetary difficulties in Europe with which I have nothing to do, and by which, if we had not been governed by England, we should not have been affected." If you want to create a grievance—universal, enduring, well-founded—which will affect every village in India, Assam, and Burma, I do not think you could go to work in a more ingenious and effective way. Before I leave this part of the subject I should like to quote a few words from the statement made to the Conference by a gentleman whose opinion will command universal respect, Mr. Alfred de Rothschild. He said—

"Gentlemen, I need hardly remind you that the stock of silver in the world is estimated at some thousands of millions; and if this Conference were to break up without arriving at any definite result, there would be a depreciation in the value of that commodity which it would be frightful to contemplate, and out of which a monetary panic would ensue, the far-spreading effects of which it would be impossible to foretell."

And now, Sir, is there any remedy? Is it too late to avert the evils impending over us? Fortunately, I believe, that it

is not. The sword is suspended over our heads by a single hair, but it has not yet fallen. There is still a way out of the difficulty by International agreement—by bimetallism, or by some better plan if one can be discovered. I went to Brussels when the Conference assembled there on purpose to satisfy myself as to whether any International agreement was possible. I look upon the question as entirely a practical one, and I was not going to waste time and trouble over this matter if International agreement appeared to be impossible; but, I am happy to say, I came to the conclusion that International agreement was not only possible but easy, and could most certainly be arranged if England did not stop the way. And here I think I ought to point out clearly to those who have not studied the question that the reason why so many of the great countries of Europe have been anxious to adopt a gold currency is not because they think there is any particular virtue or advantage in a gold currency, but because they wish to have the same currency as England. If England had adopted silver monometallism they would have wished to be silver monometallic also; and if England became bimetallic it would be to their advantage to be bimetallic; for this reason: that the trade between any two countries is immensely facilitated when the legal tender money in each country is composed of the same metal or of the same two metals. Now, the exchange business of a country like England with a monometallic gold standard naturally divides itself into three main divisions: First, exchange with those countries who have a gold standard; secondly, with those countries who have a silver standard; and, thirdly, with those countries whose currency is paper. The simplest of all forms of exchange is with a country like Australia, which has exactly the same standard coin as our own—the sovereign. A man in Australia, if he has a debt to pay in this country, has only to see that he has the requisite number of sovereigns at his bank, and he knows that he cannot by any chance be obliged to pay more than the cost of freight and insurance for sending these coins to England; but as the par of exchange is not determined by the denomination of the coins, but by the amount of pure metal in them, the effect is exactly the same for all other

nations who are on the gold standard. Then comes the question of exchange with a silver-using country. Now, for very many years, as long as silver was about 60d. an ounce, and the ratio of silver to gold  $15\frac{1}{2}$  to 1, the ratio between gold-using countries and silver-using countries was almost as steady as between two gold-using countries. The par of exchange was practically 1 ounce of gold against  $15\frac{1}{2}$  ounces of silver, and did not vary far from that point. Now that the link between gold and silver has been broken, the par of exchange between gold and silver has practically disappeared; and any man who has a debt to pay in gold in this country, and has only silver to pay it with, does not know that at the time of payment he may not have to pay 24, 25, or even 30 ounces of silver against an ounce of gold, and that whatever profit he hoped to gain by the transaction may not be turned into a loss. In the case of countries whose currency is paper, the evil is, of course, greater still, unless the amount of paper in circulation is rigidly restricted to such an amount as will keep the paper on a par with gold, because at any moment a large new issue of paper money may upset all calculations, and bring about a state of things like that we see in the Argentine Republic at the present moment. The object, therefore, of all nations is in the interest of their traders to have for their standard money the same as that of the great trading and financial countries of the world, such as England, the United States, and France, whether the system adopted be gold monometallic, or silver monometallic, or a combination of the two, like bimetallism. The only reason why European nations wish to keep large reserves of gold in what is called their war-chests, is because in case of war they would have to buy arms and ammunition and provisions and stores from the United States and England, which under the present system have to be paid for in gold. If England and the United States were bimetallic, it would not matter whether their war-chests held gold or whether they held silver, as they could pay for their purchases in either metal. And now, Sir, I should like to call the attention of the House for one moment to the attitude of the different nations at the Conference which has just been held. We will take

the United States first. They sent across the Atlantic five gentlemen of great ability thoroughly conversant with the question, and admirably qualified to represent the opinions of a great nation like America on a great financial question. They did not all belong to the same Political Party, but they were all agreed in recommending to the Conference that bimetallism was the only satisfactory solution of the question. At the same time, they were perfectly willing and anxious to examine any other proposals, and to endeavour, with the help of the Representatives of the other Powers, to find some solution of the problem. I think the attitude in the United States in this matter has been very much misrepresented, and it is with very great pain and regret that I see in our leading newspapers frequent assertions that the people in the United States have been actuated in this matter solely by a desire to sell the produce of their mines, and to find an outlet for the silver they have accumulated in their treasury. This assertion I believe to be entirely untrue. The average production of silver in the United States in the last three years has only amounted to the commercial value of about  $57\frac{1}{2}$  million of dollars—or, in English money, something under 12 million sterling—and it is calculated that one-seventh of the mines belong to English companies and English capitalists. Dr. Andrews, one of the Representatives of the United States at the Conference, estimated the proportion of the value of silver produced annually in the States to their total production to be four in a thousand or  $\cdot 004$ , and he gave the values of the production of some of their principal industries, with the result of showing that for every dollar's worth of silver which is produced annually in the United States, 249 dollars' worth is produced of other things—that is to say, that the annual production of silver is a very small factor in the sum total of the production of the United States. Not one man in 100 of the citizens of the United States can be interested in a silver mine, while at least 90 in 100 are in favour of International bimetallism, and the free coinage of silver by International agreement. The reason, Sir, which induced the United States Government to purchase and coin silver and to use silver certificates has been very much misunder-

stood in this country. It has not been done in the interests of the owners of the silver mines, but on account of the deliberate determination of the Government and citizens of that great country, that a sufficient supply of legal tender money should be provided, to prevent the extreme contraction of the currency which would otherwise have taken place, and with a view to holding the scales fairly between debtor and creditor. Now, Sir, I was myself in the United States in the year 1873, at the time of the great financial panic and crisis in that country, and saw some of the effects of it. This crisis was caused by the increasing value of the paper currency, which resulted from its diminution in quantity in proportion to the increasing wants and the increasing population of the States. The bank notes which had been at one time so much depreciated that 250 dollars of them were only worth 100 dollars in gold, had at that time fallen to the premium of about  $12\frac{1}{2}$ , so that,  $112\frac{1}{2}$  paper dollars would purchase 100 dollars in gold. All who had borrowed money at the time of the low value of the bank notes were great losers. Many people were ruined, and the destruction of credit and the disturbance of business were very great. When the United States resumed specie payments, this cause of contraction came naturally to an end. The attention of the people in the United States had, however, been drawn to the question of currency, and there was already a good deal of talk about it in 1873. I remember attending a debate in the Senate on the subject, either in 1873 or the beginning of 1874. They saw clearly that their increasing population and increasing trade would necessitate constant additions to the currency, and that for the basis of this currency they must have either gold or silver, or both. Having just gone through all the misery attendant on an appreciating currency, consequent on the rise in the value of bank notes and the resumption of gold payment, they were not disposed to go through the same thing again on account of the appreciation of gold itself, and they saw clearly that if gold was to be the sole basis of their circulation, and if they were to enter into the general scramble for gold to obtain sufficient for their needs, the result would be an immense appreciation of gold, and a very great fall in

the price of silver, and of all other commodities for which gold was exchanged. They had grasped the fact that an appreciating currency robs the debtor for the benefit of the creditor. They also saw clearly that the producing classes are, and must be, the great debtors, and in the United States the producers are the people who are most thought of, contrary to the general idea which seems to prevail here, that consumers only have to be thought of, and that producers must look out for themselves. The attitude of the United States is perfectly clear in this matter. They say—“We think the best solution of the problem is bimetallism, but we are perfectly willing to consider and give our best attention to any other plan that may be brought forward.” Let us now look at the attitude of France, so well explained by M. Tirard, the present Minister of Finance at Paris. He tells us, in effect, that France has accumulated such immense stocks of both gold and silver metal that her interests are safe in any case, but that France had accepted an invitation to the Conference knowing that there is such a solidarity of interests between the different countries of the civilised world, that no one nation has any right to be indifferent to any question or social problem which affects the interests of all—a sentiment, Sir, which I think we shall all admit to be worthy of the great Minister of a great country, and to be in welcome contrast with the selfish opinions we have heard so much of, which seem to assume that the interests of one country can be separated from those of all the other nations of the world. M. Tirard tells us plainly that in his opinion France has always been, and is still, bimetallist, but that they cannot open their Mints to the free coinage of silver for individual account so long as the other great countries refuse to do the same, for the very natural reason that silver would be sent to France by other countries in settlement of International differences, and that they would refuse to take it back again from France when there was a balance to settle the other way; but he gives us plainly to understand that if other countries would agree to adopt bimetallism, France and the Latin Union would be willing to consider the question with them. I think that it will be admitted that the following words of M.

Tirard, quoted from the Report of the Commission, will show that it is not France or the Latin Union which is stopping the way. M. Tirard, Delegate of France,

"Feared that Mr. Cannon had incorrectly understood him if, on the ground of his declaration, Mr. Cannon thought that the Latin Union, or, to be more exact, France, in whose name M. Tirard had spoken, was less friendly to bimetallicism than England. M. Tirard declared that he had said nothing of the kind. On the contrary, he had said that France was bimetallicist in fact, and that if she would not resume the free coinage of silver, and if she would not go back to absolute bimetallicism, it was only because England and other countries of Europe had declared in the most formal way that they intended to remain monometallic, and that, at least for the moment, they were not disposed to admit the white metal to their Mints."

In another speech M. Tirard defined the nations whose adherence to a bimetallic plan was necessary as England, Germany, Austria, Hungary, the Scandinavian nations and others. Now, Sir, would the other nations join? It seems to me that we are moving in a vicious circle. We send Representatives to a Conference the known views of four out of five of whom are opposed to bimetallicism. Therefore, all the other countries imagine that England is absolutely opposed to any change, and as they will not adopt any system without her, they are extremely reserved in their declarations, thinking that it is useless to attempt to do anything. Then our Representatives report—

"In the first place, in addition to the distinct declarations on the part of some of the most important European Powers that they would not entertain bimetallicism."

Now, what is the truth of the matter? Are other nations opposed to bimetallicism or are they opposed to bimetallicism without England? I believe most honestly and sincerely that what the other countries object to is bimetallicism without England, as they see that bimetallicism with England included would be to the advantage of every one—to England most of all. Russia has neither gold nor silver in circulation, so bimetallicism would not affect her at present, but it would be of immense service to her in getting back to a metallic standard, which it is a great object for her to do. The Scandinavian nations will probably join the larger countries,

but in any case their action could not imperil the success of the arrangement. Holland sent two extremely able and convinced bimetallicists, and there is no doubt that the citizens of Holland are almost unanimous in the wish for bimetallicism. Spain and Mexico are willing to accept bimetallicism in concert with the other Powers. Germany has been very reserved in her declarations, but I cannot believe that Germany would refuse to join all the other great countries. It would manifestly be to her interests to join them. Germany has been making great efforts lately to push her manufactures in all parts of the world, and with very great success, not only in countries with a gold standard, but in countries with a silver standard also; and for trade purposes it would be an immense advantage to her to have the same system of money as the countries she trades with, and that her customers in silver-using countries should be able to pay her in their own money. And what are the conditions of Government in Germany? We have a young and intelligent ruler, with no antiquated and out-of-date prejudices to get rid of, determined to master these questions, and to do the best he can for his country; and in no country in the world is there a larger number of men more thoroughly instructed in all these matters, or who have given more painstaking and accurate attention to them. Falling prices have caused, and are causing, great Socialistic disturbances in Germany, and anything which can tend to arrest this fall, and restore contentment, must be regarded sympathetically by the German Government. Of Austria-Hungary, as they have given us no indication of their views in this matter, it is difficult to speak, but they are initiating a great reform in their monetary system, and certainly bimetallicism would make it very much easier for them to carry it out satisfactorily. My conclusion, Sir, is this: that everything depends upon the action of England. I am thoroughly convinced, and I believe nearly all the members of the Conference are thoroughly convinced, that bimetallicism could easily be carried if England would agree, but that no plan of any sort or kind is likely to be agreed to without the concurrence of England. England has taken a very great responsibility in

this matter, and if great misfortunes fall upon our manufactures and trading industries, in consequence of the Conference being a failure and nothing being done, it will be England alone who will be blamed for it. If the members of the Conference are convinced that the English Representatives really intend to use their utmost endeavours to find some way out of the difficulty, I have no doubt that a way will be found. And, Sir, I wish to say one word on the question of the Representatives we are going to send there. I do not wish to make any reflection upon anyone. I believe that all our Representatives are upright, honourable, conscientious men; but I wish humbly to submit to this House whether, when you send Representatives to a Conference with the object of finding a remedy for an evil, the most likely way to accomplish your purpose is to send any Representatives who are conscientiously convinced that no evil exists, and therefore that no remedy is required. And now I have to thank the House for the very great indulgence which they have extended to me; and, Sir, representing as I do an enormous manufacturing constituency, the largest but one single constituency in the United Kingdom, and believing, as I do, that the employment and means of subsistence of many thousands residing in my constituency are immediately threatened by the dangers which are confronting us, I hope this House will admit that I should have been wanting in my duty if I had failed to take the very earliest opportunity of calling the attention of the House to this very serious matter. And I will conclude with a direct challenge to our opponents. I call upon them not to confine themselves entirely to their old stock arguments. Of course, we must expect to hear that bimetallicists are wicked wolves of debtors, who are trying to eat up poor little innocent lambs of creditors. No doubt the old familiar bogies will be trotted out:—The bogey of the possible finding of that solid mountain of silver which the world has been looking for for some thousands of years, and has not yet succeeded in finding; the bogey that people will pay their debts in wheelbarrows full of silver; that the ratio could not be maintained; and, lastly, the arch bogey that the financial supremacy of England would be

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destroyed if we ceased to handicap foreign financiers by the fact that England is the only place where gold is sure to be paid for bills on demand. These arguments have been refuted over and over again, but our opponents seem to think that this controversy is a game of ninepins. As often as we upset their arguments they pick them up again, put them back in their places, and then think that they are quite prepared for the next comer. But now, Sir, I challenge them to produce arguments which, at the present time, and with our present knowledge, would induce this House, if the world had remained bimetallic up to the present time, to change bimetallicism for monometallism. Personally, I believe that financiers would share, like every one else, in the prosperity which bimetallicism would bring; but even supposing that it were not so, can you imagine anyone standing up in this House and proposing to add several million sterling a year to the taxation of India, to sacrifice all debtors, to ruin the agricultural, the cotton, the iron industries, and to depress all others, for the sake of protecting a few financiers in London against the competition of their rivals abroad? Has the mountain of silver been found? Were people paid in barrowful of silver when bimetallicism existed? Do we not know that the ratio of value between gold and silver was maintained by the action of the law extremely steady for hundreds and even thousands of years prior to 1873? Will our opponents tell us wherein the special virtue of this beautiful and semi-sacred experiment of monometallism consists; what good it has done in us the past, what good it is doing in us the present, what good it is going to do us in the future? I have to-day told the House, in as plain and straightforward language as I can command, what I believe to be the evils of the present system. I call upon our opponents to tell us, in equally plain and straightforward language, what its advantages are, so that the House may judge between us. I beg to move—

“That, in view of the growing divergence of value between gold and silver, and the serious evils resulting therefrom, this House urges Her Majesty's Government to use its utmost influence to procure the re-assembly of the Monetary Conference, and to impress upon our Representatives the immediate necessity of finding some effective remedy in concert with other nations.”

\*MR. S. MONTAGU (Tower Hamlets, Whitechapel) said, he had great pleasure in seconding the Resolution. He did not propose to discuss the details of bimetallism. His opinions on that subject were well known inside and outside the House, but he felt bound to state that he considered International bimetallism still holds the field as the most effective remedy for the present evils, and that it would be the best preventive of danger and disaster in the future. Nevertheless, he should welcome any other wise proposal that would render stable our Eastern exchanges. He had been a Bimetallist ever since he had commenced business 45 years ago—25 years' experience of the world's currencies in what were practically universally bimetallic times, and 20 years since that system was wilfully destroyed. He had witnessed the financial effects of bimetallism when we had a deluge of gold from California and Australia, and only one country was so foolish at that period as to demonetise gold, and that country was Holland. In consequence of bimetallism, we were enabled to exchange in France vast sums of gold for silver, which enabled us to buy cotton in silver-using countries at the time of the cotton famine. Since 1873 that splendid compensating balance based on the two metals had been destroyed by the action of Germany and the Latin Union, and consequently silver could no longer be coined in Europe, and the growing divergence between gold and silver caused serious difficulty. It separated India financially from Europe. The instability of the rupee acted like a quicksand in which fortunes had been engulfed. Occasionally that quicksand had the appearance of steadiness, but it was exceedingly dangerous on account of the instability of the exchange. He thought that Germany and the Latin Union made a great mistake in closing their Mints to the free coinage of silver, and he believed that with the co-operation of this country and the United States they would gladly retrace their steps. Since 1873 he had witnessed the steady decadence of our Eastern trade, not in quantity but in character. Prior to that date our trade with India and China was mainly conducted by men of renown, who carried it on with energy tempered by prudence. Later on it had been characterised by

a gambling spirit tempered by discredit. In former days a merchant trading in cotton or tea could base his operations on statistics of existing stocks, and stock and crop prospects; but now all his hopes might be shattered simply by the precipitate sale of silver in the London market. These phases of Eastern trade, the steady and prudent stage, and the speculative and gambling stage, had been succeeded by deep depression, by hand to mouth trading, which like a canker eats into the very roots of commerce and diminished the revenue. The future prospects of the gold value of silver and rupees were extremely gloomy. A storm was brewing on the other side of the Atlantic which might wreck the fortunes of traders with silver-using countries. Could his right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer say that this was a satisfactory state of things? The Chancellor of the Exchequer might declare that on no condition would he tamper with our currency, and on no consideration would he encumber the British public with depreciated silver in the place of appreciated gold. He agreed with those who worship the golden calf taking no warning of the plague which followed that worship. If, through the re-assembling of the Monetary Conference a wise plan should be adopted by all the Great Powers, that course could hardly be styled tampering with our currency. He (Mr. Montagu) could also with confidence assert that with universal bimetallism the British public would not in any way be encumbered by silver. On the contrary, gold would not be so largely hoarded in foreign banks, but would be more plentiful than now. Does any intelligent Englishman carry about with him even £20 in gold? Is any internal business transaction carried out by the payment of a large amount of gold? The tendency of the civilised world was to use bank notes instead of coin, and cheques instead of either. They had seen lately the French people preferring Bank of France notes to gold, although these notes were payable in silver. When the Chancellor of the Exchequer issued the long expected one pound notes the circulation in this country would eventually be paper—half sovereigns—and silver with a few sovereigns thrown in. He felt certain that if international bimetallism prevailed



no one in this country would be inconvenienced. No change in our currency would be apparent; cheques, bank notes, and even gold would be equally available, and the struggle for gold would cease. When the Monetary Conference re-assembled other proposals besides bi-metallism would no doubt be considered. The plan proposed by Mr. Alfred de Rothschild should be adopted rather than to allow things to drift. Mr. Rothschild's objections to bi-metallism were easily answered; but he would only answer one of them. Mr. Rothschild exaggerated the difficulty of exporting silver as compared with gold, and spoke of £1,000,000 sterling in gold. Well, that would weigh about  $7\frac{1}{2}$  tons, and the same value in fine silver would now weigh about 176½ tons. But shipping companies charged the same freight for both, a percentage on the value, and even in many cases shipping companies preferred silver. It made very good ballast, required no packing, and its weight was its own protection. The great and growing divergence between gold and silver was a most serious matter for the Indian Government and Indian traders. The Indian Government could not view with indifference the ever increasing burden of their external debt. The investments of this country in Indian Government Stocks, and in Railways and in other Indian Government Securities amounted to about £200,000,000. There were besides very large investments in India by banks and traders, the amount of which it was almost impossible to ascertain; but if he said £300,000,000 as the total of our investments he believed it would be well under the mark. The rupee was now worth a little less than 15d., which had grievously increased the burden of India. A fall of 1d. in every rupee meant a loss of capital of over £20,000,000 sterling, which loss must fall either upon English traders or their fellow subjects in India. If the rupee fell to 1s.—and who could foretell that even that will be the end of the fall?—the natives of India must be still further taxed, through no fault of theirs, in order to pay this gold tribute, and railway rates in India must be considerably and continuously raised unless dividends were to fall off. Again, the English residents in India must certainly have their salaries increased in accord-

ance with the depreciation in value of what was called the vanishing rupee. Although money might be a drug here and much required in India, it would be very dangerous to go to the relief of the Indian people, because to turn gold into silver without any certainty as to the future price was a gambling transaction. It had been asserted that by buying sterling bills in India for forward delivery the English trader could be protected. That was a risk in ordinary times; but hon. Members can hardly realise the constant fluctuation in silver, generally downwards. In January, 1892, the highest price of silver was  $43\frac{3}{4}$ , and the lowest  $41\frac{1}{4}$ ; in February the highest was  $41\frac{1}{2}$ , and the lowest  $41\frac{1}{8}$ , and so on, until we come to August, when the highest was  $39\frac{1}{2}$  and the lowest  $37\frac{1}{8}$ . On one occasion silver fell 5 per cent. in three days. He now came to another important point—namely, the effect of the decline in silver upon our working-classes. There was no doubt that the well-being of British workmen depended greatly upon the well-being of workmen abroad. Trade combination here could never be completely effective unless it was also in some degree international. What could be the permanent benefit of successful struggle here if workmen abroad were underpaid. Their cheaper productions would successfully compete with ours in foreign markets. Now, the effect of the decline in the gold value of the rupee was a decline in the gold price of Indian native labour. Therefore, in present conditions a fall in the price of silver in London affected every British industry with which silver-using countries compete. He would remind the House in this connection of the well-known instance of the substitution of Indian cotton goods in China and Japan for British goods. Indian workmen cannot combine, although that country was worse off than if she had an inconvertible paper currency. A forced paper circulation could be kept within bounds according to the internal requirements. But India had a practically inconvertible silver currency, which could be indefinitely increased from outside by sending to India silver which would not be used elsewhere. A remarkable speech was delivered recently in the House by the hon. Member for the Woodbridge Division

of Suffolk (Mr. Everett), which included a reference to this question. The hon. Member pointed out in very forcible terms the advantages which arose from a plentifully circulating medium in this country in the early part of this century. All sound financiers condemn inflation arising from enforced circulation of inconvertible paper. The chief, perhaps only, objection to such inflation was that a day of reckoning must come when the note circulation must be contracted, and the reaction counteracted all previous advantages. But what objection could be taken to inflation based upon an international currency such as gold? The production and importation of gold were a great advantage to the masses by diffusing wealth and levelling upwards the social condition of a great number of people. He agreed with the hon. Member for the Woodbridge Division as to the great advantage to English-speaking people caused by the gold discoveries in California and Australia. If gold production was advantageous, so would be the production of silver, if tied to gold by an International Convention. Now, he was not in favour of a great rise in silver, and should oppose isolated action in this country. That absurdity was tried in the United States and was found to fail. It was beyond the power of one country, or perhaps of two countries, to fix the value of a metal of which the stock was estimated by hundreds of millions sterling. They must recognise that this country had a greater interest in silver than any other. We possessed a far larger proportion of the world's silver than any one or any two countries in the world. We had invested a far larger proportion of our wealth in silver-using countries than any one or two countries in the world. We have to sell on behalf of the Indian Government silver in the shape of Indian Council Bills to the extent of £16,000,000 sterling annually. Could they wonder, therefore, that foreign powers declared that England stopped the way? The resolution was a very reasonable one. The re-assembling of the Conference was feasible, because the delegates of the United States would, after the change of Government, have a steady standpoint, and it was worth while to meet to consider their definite proposals. The Conference failed to arrive at a conclusion mainly on account

of the transition state of the United States. Government and the attitude of some of our delegates. Probably some practical proposal might result from the next meeting. He thought that as a general principle it was wise to encourage such a Conference. He should be glad if the scope could be enlarged, so as to include the assimilation of the laws governing other forms of international currencies, such as bills of exchange and other international bonds. Such meetings promoted goodwill among nations, and should be welcomed in this country, whose complex interests were secured by friendly relations with other powers. He would, therefore, urge upon the Government to encourage the reassembling of the Conference, and by facilitating a reasonable settlement of this great question promote the welfare of our working-classes in manufacturing and agricultural districts; promote the welfare of the people of India, for whose social and financial well-being we are responsible; and also render more secure the commerce of our traders with silver-using countries, and revive the prosperity of this great Empire.

Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That, in view of the growing divergence of value between gold and silver, and the serious evils resulting therefrom, this House urges Her Majesty's Government to use its utmost influence to procure the re-assembly of the Monetary Conference, and to impress upon our representatives the immediate necessity of finding some effective remedy in concert with other nations." — (*Sir Henry Meysey-Thompson.*)

\*THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. W. E. GLADSTONE, Edinburgh, Midlothian): My right hon. Friend the Member for the London University (Sir John Lubbock) has given notice of his intention to move the Previous Question as an Amendment to the Motion which you, Mr. Speaker, have just read from the Chair. But the House, I think, will not be surprised at our feeling—especially as we have been appealed to very pointedly by the Mover of the Motion—that the opinion of the Government upon a Motion of this character ought to be declared upon a positive and main issue—namely, whether the Motion itself is one fitted to be adopted, and not merely upon a question of opportunism. I am, therefore, very

glad to have an opportunity of saying a few words upon this Motion, and as I know there are many gentlemen who are desirous to express themselves upon it, some of them, perhaps, to the extent of the Mover of the Motion, and knowing that the hours of the evening are limited, I shall endeavour to compress what I have to say within a very moderate compass. Now, Sir, I find a difficulty in understanding the nature of the step the House is called upon to take. The speech of the Mover and the speech of my hon. Friend the Second are manifestly speeches in favour of bimetallism. They mean bimetallism and they mean nothing else, except in so far as they say, if you can show anything else as good as this then they will accept it. But in the absence of any such alternative bimetallism has been the theme of their speeches and is the idol of their affections and imagination. But why have they not put bimetallism into their Resolution? They have not only not put it into their Resolution, but the hon. Mover of the Resolution has been most careful to explain, in his anxiety for a comprehensive division which shall include all descriptions of voters—voters of all kinds and forms—that those who voted for his Motion will in no degree pledge themselves to bimetallism. Then to what do they pledge themselves? What is the real effect of this Motion? Let me endeavour to get at it as well as I can in the difficult position in which we are placed by the speech of the hon. Mover. The object of the Motion to a certain extent is clear as far as it relates to the Monetary Conference at Brussels. That Conference was assembled, I apprehend, I may say, on the direct invitation of the United States, and it is now proposed that the initiative should be taken out of the hands of the United States and be put into our hands. That is a very extraordinary and it may be a very unprecedented proposal for us to adopt. The hon. Gentleman says that everybody is desirous to move in the matter, only they await the guidance of England. The assertion is confuted by the very existence of the Conference. The United States did not wait for the guidance of England in calling for this Conference. They took the initiative, and we, who followed that initiative

with more or less of zeal, sympathy, or misgiving, if not unfavour, have a right to expect from the United States a declaration of what, having taken that initiative and brought together the Powers of Europe, she means to propose. It appears to me that the hon. Mover and my hon. Friend who seconded the Motion have very little faith in the United States indeed, although the United States took the initiative. But having somewhat discourteously snatched the question from the hands of the United States, what do they do? They propose to hand it over to us who sit upon this Bench. Is that a judicious choice on their part? Are we prepared to make any more beneficial use of that initiative than the United States have done? On the contrary, our opinions are that no plan has been opened by which it is possible or shown to be possible for us at the present time to make a change in the standard of value in this country. Therefore, having taken the initiative from those whom we have every reason to assume would be ready to use it, the hon. Gentlemen propose to hand it over to people who they know are not ready to use it. And still more extraordinary—and, if the hon. Mover of the Motion will forgive me for saying so, still more irrational—is that point which remains to be noticed—namely, that not only are we unprepared and unprovided, through the poverty of our minds, with any good grounds for the reconstruction of our currency, but he himself has not put such a plan into our hands. If he is going to send us to Brussels and to order us to stir up these flagging Deputies to make a great change in the currency of Europe, surely the least he can do is to save us from a ridiculous position. For our position would be nothing less than ridiculous if we were to accept this Resolution, and if, having stimulated our representatives to compel the Conference to do something when the members of the Conference modestly expressed their disposition to listen with all deference to what we proposed, and said, "Only let us know what you recommend," we were to reply, "We have nothing to recommend to you." I perfectly understand those sound orthodox bimetallists who condemn in the strong terms they choose to use the utter vacuity of mind of the right hon. Gentle-

man the Chancellor of the Exchequer and his Colleagues, who have not got a good bimetallic plan in order to produce that delightful state of things in which prices rise and everybody is happy. That I comprehend. But I do not comprehend why it is that we, being in this state of utter poverty and destitution of mind, the hon. Gentleman will not give us the smallest hope or put any language in our mouths which, when we go before the members of the Conference, whom, by moral force, we are to call together, would enable us to start it on its career. I therefore come to the conclusion that the Motion of the hon. Member is very unsatisfactory. If it were carried it would place us in a ludicrous position. But I am bound to say, notwithstanding that profound veneration for this House which on all occasions I feel, that that ridiculous element in our position, I am afraid, would not be confined to ourselves, and that some of it would redound possibly upon the Mover of the Motion, and very considerably upon the House which has sent us on this fool's errand to Brussels to ask the Conference to do something, and not to give them the smallest hint of what it is. I now come to the question on which I am entirely at issue with the hon. Mover of the Resolution as to a matter of fact. He dwelt in various parts of his speech very strongly upon the fact that it was England, and England alone, which stopped the way, and he even quoted a speech from M. Tirard, the French Minister and delegate, in support of his allegation. Has he read that speech? and, if he has, is the hon. Member not aware that in that speech it is declared that several of the greatest Powers in Europe had committed themselves to the opinion that they desired to make no change in the monetary system of the world? The French Delegate mentioned Germany, Austria, and Russia, and in addition to these we know that the same thing has been declared by Switzerland, Sweden, and Norway, and, I believe, also by Denmark. Well, Sir, there you have six or seven of the Powers assembled at Brussels who have signified their intention to make no fundamental change in their monetary system, and that without the smallest reference to England and independently of any course that England might think it proper to

take. I do not accuse the hon. Gentleman and my hon. Friend behind me in the slightest degree of misrepresentation. The fact is that their minds and imaginations are so possessed of the enormous blessings that they have got to bestow upon mankind by the medium of this bimetallic system, that they are persuaded that all the Powers, when they come close to the question, must share their views, and consequently, instead of recognising the fact that these Powers at Brussels do not support them, they put words into the mouths of representatives of those Powers which they never used. Russia, for instance, has not said a word in favour of the proposed change, but the hon. Mover of the Motion says that this change would be so beneficial to Russia that he is perfectly convinced that Russia must see it and must hasten to adopt it. If that is the case why did not Russia say so at Brussels? My own opinion, speaking roughly, is that the Powers assembled at Brussels were divided into two moieties. One is those Powers who have declared that they intend to make no change, and which have Germany and Austria at their head, and the other consists of the Powers some of whom refer to England and say that if England has a proposal to make they will listen to it with deference, and some of whom indicate they will not be unwilling to make the change. But what is the uniform characteristic of this second moiety, the moiety which is most favourable to the views of the Mover of the Resolution? It is that not one of them has given the slightest, the faintest, the most shadowy indication of the kind of change they would be prepared to discuss with England or to adopt. That, Sir, was the condition of the Conference. We shall do nothing to discourage the meeting of this Conference. We have endeavoured to act with courtesy and goodwill to all the Powers of Europe, and we are very glad that every measure should be taken that tends to probe and sift this great question to the bottom; but, at the same time, it would be hardly respectful of us to give positive recommendations when in respect to their recommendations we are totally unprepared with plans for giving them effect, and when, I am sorry to say, the Mover and Secunder still leave us in an

unhappy state of mental destitution with regard to such plans. With regard to the meeting of the Conference, one is a little reminded of the old proverb that one man may bring a horse to the water but that 20 cannot make him drink. The hon. Member who moved this Motion has not shown that he is possessed of the magic secret which is absolutely necessary in order to make this Conference drink. I will not go into all the points raised by the Mover and Seconder of the Motion, but I will come to the consideration of what is the standard of value and what are the qualities which give to that standard of value those merits which have led mankind to seek it through a long and painful process, and to find their way step by step towards it, and having got it, to retain it. It seemed to me strange that no notice was taken by the hon. Mover of this Motion of a question of the most practical and vital importance which has been raised by Mr. Giffen, and which evidently lies at the very threshold of the subject, when we view it as a subject which has attained acceptance by Parliament, and which is now to assume a legislative form. The point is this: What is to take place in this country with respect to the enormous sums of money that are held at call? Now, I do not wish to impute anything, except that which is accepted by the promoters of the Motion. What are the facts? The complaint is a complaint of low prices. The desired condition which it is sought to bring about is a state of rising prices; the means to be adopted are to supply the people, who require money for the payment of debts or purchase of commodities, with a currency to which they will have access on easier terms. They are to get that currency cheaper. Very well. The consequence of that will be, if that currency is to be obtained cheaper, that any given nominal amount will be worth less in that currency than it is in the present currency. It is unquestionably easy to lower the currency a little by a very mild and genial process, like some of those medicines which are administered to the system and work without violence or pain. Now, I ask any hon. Gentleman in this House to put himself in the position of a man who has money at call. I trust all those whom I am addressing are in that happy position.

*Mr. W. E. Gladstone*

He has money at call, and that money must be paid to him under the law, every farthing of it, in sovereigns. But suppose the hon. Gentleman by his eloquence, and the aid of those who support him, should have induced this House to pass a Bill, under influences prevailing elsewhere, by which after a particular day the money out at call, and now repayable in sovereigns to him, and in nothing worse, would become repayable in either sovereigns or silver in a ratio arbitrarily fixed by the State, what would be the effect? After that particular date they would get for the money out at call rather less in real value than they would get before that date. The consequence would be that monometallists, bimetalists, silver men and gold men—every one of you—would call in every farthing you have out at call. You are not going to be content with £90 or £95 after a given date if you can get £100 by calling in your money before that given date. By-the-bye, I think Mr. Giffen, the highest living authority—though there are many living authorities well acquainted with this subject—estimates that the sum so out at call is about £600,000,000; and I want to know what is to be the effect of saying to the owners of that £600,000,000, "Allow your money to remain where it is and you will have to take £90 or £95 for every £100, but before a given date you could get £100." I want to know whether they would not call in their money when they could get £100; and I want to know, too, what would be the effect of that on the credit of the country, and on the stability and firmness of many of the best and most stable banking and commercial houses in the land? There is another point that I would just refer to for a moment in the speech of the hon. Mover of this Motion, as it deserves some notice. Does he anticipate the re-entry of the human race into the Garden of Eden? For he seems to think that unless we adopt his plan we shall fall below our present mediocre and mixed condition, and very likely go down lower into some other region which it would not be prudent, becoming, or politic to name. That appeared to me to be the tendency of it, and the purport of it when developed into its full meaning. He spoke of the condition of our manufactures pining in a miserable

manner for the last 20 years under the operation of monometallism, and he said that the cotton districts in particular were to go down to prairie value. That is the expression he used—prairie value. Such are the eyes with which the hon. Baronet reads the facts of our condition. He says that till 1873, when the Bank of France coined silver freely for every one who took it there, we did wonders; we were in a state of continual advancement; but that since 1873, we have been pining regularly away, until we are now little better than skin and bone, and the prairie value is all that will be left to us in place of the vast manufactures and the vast invested capital in the cotton trade of the country. Is that a fair representation of the course of the cotton trade of this country during the last 20 years? I am informed, from no secret sources, that during less than that time the cotton trade has changed enormously. I take the year 1877 and compare it with 1891—this period of decline, of depression, of divergency between gold and silver, and of all the horrors that will naturally be expected to follow. What was the state of the cotton trade in 1877? I believe I am correct in saying that it was then represented by 1,100,000,000 lbs.; while, in 1891, that miserable, perishing industry presented to us only the small figure of 1,800,000,000 lbs. I am speaking of imported raw cotton, which is the measure and extent of the industry. Is it not singular that gentlemen should come down here primed with facts, and that the facts should be so acted upon, through the warmth of their philanthropic affections burning to attain a happier state of things for mankind, that they should not be able to take cognizance of figures like those, which show within the past 14 years an increase of something like 60 per cent. in the aggregate extent of the cotton trade of this country? What I have endeavoured to bring to my own mind, and what I should like to bring to the minds of others, is the consideration of this question—What is the standard of value? We know perfectly well that gold is our standard of value. But what is meant by a standard of value?—for till we know this I do not see how we are to attain to a right position for judging of the qualities which

ought to recommend to us this or that form of legislation, including the estimation of our own standard of value. I understand by a standard of value a common measure of commodities. It is a commodity itself. I admit that ought to be fully recognised. But when you seek for a good standard of value you seek for that by the terms of which you may express the real value—that is, the real purchasing power and force of every other commodity whatsoever. What is important to the owners of or the persons interested in those other commodities? To supply them with a good standard of value. We have passed beyond the stage of barter. Barter and exchange are the primary necessity of mankind in their first efforts towards civilisation. Barter may be the first form of that exchange, but barter is so inconvenient, and so hampered by the conditions under which it acts, than no large extension of human intercourse or commerce can take place under that system, and, consequently from the very first stages of the history of mankind there are efforts, sometimes of barbarous tribes, more energetic and more forcible as they attain more strongly towards civilisation, to get at something like a standard of value. The object of it is this—that the man who has goods to sell, and is going to accept for those goods a certain portion of the standard of value, should know the real compensation he receives for the thing he is going to give up, and what he can make of the money which is to be given to him as representing the value of the object he is parting with. In the same way, with regard to the man who buys, he also wants a standard of value which will represent to him as exactly as possible the power that will be in his hands when he has bought the commodity with its value measured by the amount of circulating medium that he is willing to give for it. It is exactly like the case of a standard of height, by which you can compare with the utmost exactitude the man of 5 feet with the man of 6 feet. What you want in this standard of value to make it do its work properly is fixity, steadiness, stability, and continuity. You want its properties to be such that what it is to-day it shall be to-morrow, and what it is to-morrow it shall be the next day.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR (Manchester, E.): Hear, hear!

MR. W. E. GLADSTONE: I am very glad to hear the right hon. Gentleman opposite assent to that. Fixity and invariability are the first elements of a standard of value. It should be valuable, uniform, and portable, and these are qualities which gold possesses. But the grand thing is, if it is to be a good standard of value, it should possess fixity and invariability. That fixity and invariability cannot be absolute. If you find any commodity whatever, which should always maintain exactly one and the same relation to the sum total of all the exchanges to be effected in the world, then you will have an absolutely perfect standard; but that you cannot do. We do not pretend that gold is an absolutely unchangeable standard of value; but the belief is, at any rate, held by a large portion of civilised mankind—it is a belief growing and gaining ground from year to year—that gold is the best standard of value, because, above all, it is the least variable standard of all. The Commission which sat some time ago did not admit that the supposed scarcity of gold had been proved, and the hon. Baronet the Mover of the Resolution did not supply that proof. There are no proofs. There are some great commodities which are very low. It is not for me to dogmatise about it; but this I can say, that no proof of a gold famine has been supplied. But then, Sir, it is obvious and just to observe that the fall in some commodities—in wheat most conspicuously—is the natural result of the combined action of certain causes, the existence of which is well known, one of them being the long continuance of peace, and therefore the larger and the more free application of human industry to the business of production, and the enormous cheapening of the means of communication. Is it true that every great commodity has fallen in value? Quite the contrary. Let us look at another very great commodity—at what is, perhaps, the greatest commodity in the world, greater even than gold—that of human labour. I want to know whether that is not rising all over the world, and whether it has not risen enormously in this country, in almost every branch that can be named. Compare the wages of domestic servants

with what they were 30 or 40 years ago, in the blessed period, according to the hon. Baronet. Take also the limited class about whom I happened to hear the other day—the theatrical profession. I have it on unquestionable authority that the ordinary payments received by actors and actresses have risen largely. No one is unaware of the increase of fees in the medical profession, and I am bound to say that there are none more nobly earned in the world than by that description of labour. I do not know whether there are any in this House who are personally cognisant of all the circumstances connected with the gold discoveries. They were extremely curious and of the greatest interest; and I make this concession—that at the period of the gold discoveries, if, had it not been for those discoveries, we must have had a gold famine in the world; but owing, as some would say, to a happy accident, or, as others would say, under the influence of an old-fashioned belief, to the wise, providential adaptations which are constantly at work, the gold discoveries in California, and afterwards in Australasia, corresponded with the most astonishing development of industrial power ever known in the history of the world. It was at that very time when the railway system began, when the ocean steamer system was transformed, when the telegraph came into existence, and a multitude of material changes, all operating in the same direction; and at that very time came what is probably more powerful than all—Free Trade legislation. The result was an enormous extension of human industry, and a vast enlargement of the exchanges which had to be effected in the world. The gold discoveries appeared to meet the great want thus created, and certainly no gold famine was experienced in England at that time; but these gold discoveries became exceedingly large, especially when the Australian discoveries were rapidly accumulated on the Californian supply. The effect was that there went abroad an opinion, entertained just as strongly and as conscientiously as the present opinion about a gold famine, that there was a plethora. I am not exaggerating when I say that not only the ignorant herd, but many men of sense, and practical men who were high and solid authorities

on questions of economy, believed firmly about 40 or 45 years ago that gold was depreciated 20 or 30 per cent. I might mention a few names. There was the late Viscount Cardwell, as good an economist as I have ever known among purely political men; there was Mr. Cobden, who, in addition to his other great gifts and powers, undoubtedly stood very high as a political economist; and there was the distinguished friend of Mr. Cobden, M. Chevalier, who published a book, the main proposition of which was that gold had undergone a real depreciation of 20 per cent. All that has blown over now, and nobody believes at present in any such depreciation. I believe it so happened, too, that at that period silver was in a state of considerable steadiness, and afforded a very fair test of values in the market. I think I should be right in saying that silver then rose from 5s. to 5s. 2d. per ounce, and that gold fell about 3 per cent. That was a most severe trial, and there is no epoch in history, not even in the 16th century—when such remarkable changes were produced by the discovery of America—when so vast and enormous an addition had been made, almost at a moment's notice, to the monetary transactions of the world, and to the necessity thereby created for an enlargement of the circulating medium. That test gold has stood, and has not varied more than about 3 per cent. I should say that is a very respectable case to make out for gold as a circulating medium. If, under such pressure and such an agony of trial I might almost call it, the fluctuation of gold amounted to only a trifle, the position of gold as a standard of value is splendidly demonstrated. Now, Sir, it is proposed to give silver a share in the supply as a circulating medium, but what has been the case with regard to silver? The supply of silver appears to be subjected to more extraordinary variations than any ever known in the case of gold. The variation in the value of silver within the last 20 or 30 years is not less than 40 per cent., and not only that, but the hon. Baronet who made the Motion told us that we are not at the end of the variation, for he said that the rupee, which was once worth 2s., and which is now worth 1s. 2½d., will probably go down further, to 1s. or even to 9d. That means, therefore, that unless you step in and give the

artificial assistance of the law this great commodity of silver, which it is proposed to bring into partnership with gold as supplying a standard of value for the conduct of all exchanges, will, under the operation of actual facts, aided a little by the prophecies of the hon. Baronet, fall between 60 per cent. and 70 per cent. Am I right in contending that fixity is the proper requirement of a standard of value? If it is, I want to know how you can improve that standard of value which, under the severest circumstances, has never varied more in this country than 3 per cent. or 4 per cent., how you can prove that by associating with it a commodity which has actually varied to the extent of 40 per cent., and with respect to which those who regard it with the largest amount of favour anticipate a further variation of 25 per cent. or 30 per cent. Do you suppose this is all to be set right by fixing a ratio? On what day will you fix a ratio? And if you fix your ratio, what will be the state on the next day of the markets with reference to the commodities for which you are fixing a ratio? Do you think a man who has money to receive will be content to take less because, stepping out of your province, you have told him that he ought to be satisfied with a less valuable commodity than that which he expects? I do not believe it. I believe the opinion of those who look to fixing a ratio is that it must be a mutable ratio. I do not enter into the question whether a double standard is conceivable under certain circumstances. I believe it is. I look at the actual facts which are before me, and I ask, Is there any period during the last 30 years when you could have fixed a ratio between gold and silver by law on a given day, and when you would not have been compelled to change it again and again? If so, what is our standard of value to be? I do not mean what is the idea of the standard of value to be. Are we to choose it for its fixity, or are we to choose it for its liability to indefinite and eternal change? The hon. Member spoke rather with ridicule upon the position of this country as the great creditor of the countries of the world. Well, Sir, it is the great creditor of the countries of the world; of that there can be no doubt whatever; and it is increasingly the great creditor of the countries of the world.



I suppose there is not a year which passes over our heads which does not largely add to the mass of British investments abroad. I am almost afraid to estimate the total amount of the property which the United Kingdom holds beyond the limits of the United Kingdom, but of this I am well convinced, that it is not to be counted by tens or hundreds of millions. One thousand millions probably would be an extremely low and inadequate estimate. Two thousand millions or something even more than that is very likely to be nearer the mark. I think under these circumstances it is rather a serious matter to ask this country to consider whether we are going to perform this supreme act of self-sacrifice. I have a profound admiration for cosmopolitan principles. I can go a great length in moderation in recommending their recognition and establishment; but if there are these £2,000,000,000 or £1,500,000,000 which we have got abroad, it is a very serious matter as between this country and other countries. We have nothing to pay to them; we are not debtors at all; we should get no comfort, no consolation out of the substitution of an inferior material, of a cheaper money, which we could obtain for less and part with for more. We should get no consolation, but the consolation throughout the world would be great. This splendid spirit of philanthropy, which we cannot too highly praise—because I have no doubt all this is foreseen—would result in our making a present of £50,000,000 or £100,000,000 to the world. It would be thankfully accepted, but I think that the gratitude for your benevolence would be mixed with very grave misgivings and doubts as to your wisdom. I have shown why we should pause and consider for ourselves once, twice, and thrice before departing from the solid ground on which you have within the last half-century erected a commercial fabric unknown in the whole history of the world—before departing from that solid ground you should well consult and well consider and take no step except such as you can well justify to your own understanding, to your fellow-countrymen, and to those who come after us.

\*MR. GOSCHEN: I can thoroughly echo the last words which fell from the right hon. Gentleman, to the effect that

*Mr. W. E. Gladstone*

we must look once and twice before we do anything which shall seem in the slightest degree to compromise the splendid fabric of British commerce that has been raised up during the last half-century. But if I have been anxious that there should be a Debate upon this question to-night, it is because I believe that the basis upon which that commercial structure has been raised should be thoroughly understood and grasped, and that the more light that can be shed upon this question the better. I am sure the right hon. Gentleman and his colleagues, and the most ardent bimetallicists in this House, will agree that it is extremely important to every section of the community, and especially to those who seem to lean towards bimetallicism, that if bimetallicists are wrong they should be shown to be wrong, and that the movement which we have now witnessed should either be checked by the arguments by which it could be met, or that we should know the basis upon which it really rests. I would preface the remarks with which I am about to trouble the House with the statement that I am anxious to contribute what little I can to the understanding of this most important question. I feel the extraordinary complexity of the whole of these problems to such an extent that I believe dogmatism on either side to be thoroughly out of place, and what is specially required is that the first principles should be thoroughly understood and grasped. And I would further say that I speak simply for myself on this occasion, and I do not wish that any of those who sit around me should in any way be compromised by any doctrines I may utter. But I have taken in the past so considerable a part in discussions of this question that perhaps the House may think it would be my duty not to shrink from expressing the views which I hold upon the subject. The right hon. Gentleman commenced his most interesting speech with a discussion of the proceedings at the Conference. I will follow him with regard to that point presently. Upon that part of his speech I cannot say that I agree with him. He was entitled to deal simply with the aspect of the questions which had been put forward by the Mover and the Seconder, and he alleged, possibly with justice, that they had argued the matter mainly from a bimetallic point of view, and therefore he addressed his reply

mainly to the principal views put forward by the bimetallists on the question of the fixity of ratio and the general question of a standard of value. But there are many other questions which are interesting in this matter besides that of bimetalism, and I think the House should be acquainted with the origin of the Conference. The United States summoned the Conference; originally they couched their invitation in different language to that in which it was ultimately accepted. They couched their invitation as if the object of the Conference would be to establish a bimetallic system. The late Government did not think they could enter a Conference under an invitation which seemed to pledge them as the original invitation would have pledged them, and therefore they suggested an amendment of the invitation in the direction of saying that the object of the Conference would be to study whether there might be an increased use of silver in the currency of the nations of the world. The Conference, therefore, is not simply a Bimetallic Conference, and is not chiefly a Bimetallic Conference, but a Conference which would aim at an object which I do not know whether the right hon. Gentleman himself shares, but an object which many monometallists share, and which all the members of the Royal Commission share—namely, the object of introducing silver more largely as a subsidiary element in the currency of the world. That the variation between the value of gold and silver has been detrimental must be admitted by every one. The right hon. Gentleman spoke with fervour with reference to the necessity of the fixity of our standard. But that standard has suffered through the withdrawal of its partner to so large an extent. Originally there was a partnership between the two metals. The one partner was withdrawn almost all over Europe. In some countries it became a sleeping partner, but generally silver was dethroned, and gold was left to do, unaided by silver, the work which formerly gold performed in conjunction with silver. What was the consequence? Of course the fixity of gold suffered, because the fixity of an article such as gold with reference to commodities must depend upon the extent of the demand with reference to the stock of that metal or production of that metal.

And if gold suddenly was called upon to do more work than it had done before, then the gold standard suffered in its fixity. The right hon. Gentleman said—I do not quite understand why—I could not quite follow him—that gold had only varied 3 or 4 per cent. Gold has varied nearly 25 or 30 per cent.

MR. W. E. GLADSTONE: At what period?

MR. GOSCHEN: I do not think the right hon. Gentleman follows me. He possibly thinks simply of the variation between gold and silver. But that is not the variation of gold as a fixed standard. Of course, that gold only varied 3 or 4 per cent. with reference to silver does not show the absolute fixity of the gold as a standard; but it shows what was done by the bimetallic system in France during the years from 1853 to 1874. The right hon. Gentleman says gold only varied 3 or 4 per cent. Why, bimetallists could point to that fact as the strongest argument in their favour. It shows that where you have a bimetallic system the variation is not so great. But I am not concerned with that point. What I am concerned with is that gold in relation to commodities has varied, not 3 or 4 per cent., but 30 or 40 per cent. The right hon. Gentleman quoted Mr. Giffen as one of the highest living authorities on a point on which I do not know that Mr. Giffen is an authority—namely, on a question of banking, whether the £600,000,000 which were on call would be withdrawn or not, and how they could be met.

MR. W. E. GLADSTONE: It was on the estimate of £600,000.

MR. GOSCHEN: I am glad that Mr. Giffen did not lend his authority to such a statement. I may take it that it is the assumption of my right hon. Friend that this would be withdrawn?

SIR W. HARCOURT: It was the assumption of Mr. Herries, the banker, and who was the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

MR. GOSCHEN: If it was the Chancellor of the Exchequer of the present day who put forward such a proposal one would value the statement in regard to the whole of the surrounding circumstances of the day, but I do not think you can quote an historical statement of that kind with the whole system of banking entirely changed since that

time. I am sorry I have been led away from the general line of my argument. I should like to say a word or two on this £600,000,000, but at present I am engaged on the subject of the fixity of the standard, and the right hon. Gentleman very properly asks me for my test. Mr. Giffen himself says this—

“We cannot say positively that the recent change from a high to a low level in prices is due to change of money of the nature or in the direction of absolute contraction.”

Thus Mr. Giffen distinctly admits a change from a high to a low level of prices. I do not know that the general view that the lowering of prices is caused by the appreciation of gold would be seriously questioned.

SIR W. HARCOURT: It is questioned by the Commission.

MR. GOSCHEN: It is not questioned by the Commission. The whole of the Commission say it contributed to this effect, and they treat it as an element. They do not say how far you are to attribute that fall to the contraction of the currency; but they do not dispute that it entered largely into it. I am not sure whether Sir Thomas Farrer, in his letter in *The Times* of this morning, does not admit that point. It was admitted on all sides that the fall in the value of silver is a matter deserving of the attention of all parties; it was for that reason it was thought right that we should be asked to join in the Conference which had been proposed. The Conference examined several plans; and it is certainly my impression—and those who were present at Brussels can make it good—that practically it was the action of the English delegates that broke up the Conference. That seems to me to be of the essence of the case, and it is because some of us consider that the Conference was broken up by the action of the British delegates that we think it right that the English Government—if we can induce them to do so—should take a line which would show that they were anxious to carry out those objects which induced them originally to join the Conference. The right hon. Gentleman made merry over the demand that the English Government should take up the negotiations again; but if it is correct, as I believe it is, that it was the action of our delegates which stopped this Conference, and if it was right to go into the Conference at all,

surely we are not asking too much if we say we should wish them to do their best once more to bring the Conference together, not for the purpose of bimetalism, but for the original purpose contemplated. There were other proposals which were before that Conference. The right hon. Gentleman asked whether it was possible to find any plan at any time; whether it was not absurd to go into a Conference without any chance of finding any solution. But what did the Royal Commission say, of which his own Lord Chancellor was a member?

“We pass now to other proposals of a practical character. In our opinion it might be worth while to meet the great commercial nations on any proposals which would lead to a more extended use of silver, and so tend to prevent an apprehended further fall in the value of that metal, and to keep its relation to gold more stable.”

I base my support of the Motion not upon any bimetallic fallacy or theory at all, but upon the recommendation of the Royal Commission that it is worth while to meet great commercial nations on proposals which would lead to a more extended use of silver, and so tend to prevent an apprehended further fall in the value of that metal. This is the majority, this is the whole Commission, who were in favour of that proposal, and they are anxious to do, what? To keep the relation of silver to gold more stable. I should think the whole House would desire this greater stability. Fixity is one thing; but stability is another. Therefore, I say, no stone ought to be left unturned, no difficulties ought to be allowed to stand in the way of continued efforts to find a solution of this most complex problem, upon which eminent monometallists who sat upon this very Commission say that a further understanding with other nations of the world would be desirable. Surely that is a point which cannot be treated with ridicule, and I do not know that the right hon. Gentleman intended to treat the matter with ridicule. I think, and doubtless the right hon. Gentleman would agree with me, that the interests at stake are far too grave to allow any temporary difference of opinion to prevent negotiations which have been interrupted from being resumed. I feel the question is extremely important at the present time, because, if the Government finally allows the Conference to

break up, all attempts to increase the use of silver must necessarily be suspended or become abortive for years to come, and we shall be left face to face with a situation which I do not think the majority of the House would wish to see the country remain in. In all I have said I have not for one moment run counter to the strictest and most orthodox doctrine that might be proposed by the right hon. Gentleman himself. Well, it is said that other nations drew back—France especially. Yes, but they drew back mainly on account of the English delegates, and I think the right hon. Gentleman is a little mistaken in his view as to the attitude, for instance, of Germany. Germany entered the Conference coldly, but I know—I have ascertained myself at Berlin—that there is a growing feeling of doubt with regard to this matter; and now the agriculturists in Germany are moving very much as the agricultural interest is moving partially in this country, thinking the fall in prices is to a great extent due to the part which gold and silver play together, and thinking they ought to put pressure on the Government in regard to taking a warmer interest in the Conference. I was in another State in Germany where precisely the same matter was considered by the Government, and where they thought the matter was far more serious than they had believed in the beginning. Now, as for France, to quote the records of the Conference, M. Tirard said he feared that Mr. Cannon had incorrectly understood him if, on the ground of his declaration, Mr. Cannon thought that the Latin Union, or, to be more exact, France, in whose name M. Tirard had spoken, was less friendly to bimetallism than England. M. Tirard declared that he had said nothing of the kind. On the contrary, he had said that France was bimetallist in fact, and that if she would not resume the free coinage of silver, and if she would not go back to absolute bimetallism, it was only because England and other countries of Europe had declared in the most formal way that they intended to remain monometallic, and that they were not disposed to open their Mints to the white metal until other nations came round to some great international agreement. I think that is different from the impression conveyed by the right hon. Gentleman, and

it cannot be denied that if this country put forward some plan for the increased use of silver it would be hailed with acclamation by all the nations of Europe. Now, Mr. Speaker, I should like to touch on one or two points suggested by the right hon. Gentleman but only by way of clearing up the controversy if I may say so—not in a controversial spirit to answer the right hon. Gentleman, but to put some points on the other side to the House and country in order that it may be seen how the matter really stands. Let me refer to the question of £600,000,000 which are on call and which Mr. Herries said he thought could be withdrawn. If they could have been withdrawn at that time, I do not think any banker now would hold that such an operation would be possible. But what did the right hon. Gentleman do? He suggested how frightfully injurious it would be to every creditor if, by association of silver with gold, he should receive less than his £100—if he should receive £95 or £90 instead of £100. But what has happened to the debtors? I firmly believe if I had made the speech of the right hon. Gentleman I should have been charged with representing the capitalist class, and it would have been represented that I only thought of the man who was determined to have his pound of flesh. It is the sovereign he is to have, whatever that sovereign may command. He must have his sovereign, and it is suggested that it would be monstrous if he should have to take silver instead of gold if, owing to bimetallism, the silver at that time would not be worth £100, but worth less than £100, though everywhere current as £100. The bimetallists hold that such a variation is impossible; but suppose the value of the sovereign to have increased—and I want particularly to put this to the House—through the action, not of nature, not of the increased production of silver alone, nor through the decreased production of gold, but through the action of the law in Germany and other countries; the debtor is then precisely in that position which the right hon. Gentleman fears the creditor would be in now if we were to associate ourselves with other countries in this question. He is worse off just by so much as the sovereign he is bound to pay has risen in value. Whether there has been a depression or

fall in prices in the theatrical or medical profession I will not stop to inquire. There may be especial circumstances in these cases, but whether that is or is not so there has been, according to the testimony of Mr. Giffen, a very large fall in prices. And what is the effect then of that fall in prices which is assumed—I will say for the moment is only assumed—to be due to the displacement of silver? What is that effect? If by the greater bulk of currency you produce a rise in prices, is it not *a priori* almost certain that a contraction of the currency will produce a fall in prices? The right hon. Gentleman made an ingenious and strong argument with regard to the gold which had poured into this country between the years 1850 and 1860; and he showed the effect which that had had on the prosperity of the country. The pouring of gold into the country had had a certain effect upon our prosperity. That, I think, was the argument of the right hon. Gentleman. But if that is so, is it not certain that if the gold has got to do more work, it is equivalent to a contraction of the currency? It seems to me to follow perfectly reasonably from the premises that, if a bulk of gold poured into the currencies of the world produces a great rise in prices, a reduction of gold, or what is equivalent to the same—namely, a greater pressure put upon gold to do its work, will have an identically opposite effect. The right hon. Gentleman may challenge us to prove that. It is difficult to prove it in all the complexity of causes, but it was always alleged that that result would take place. I ventured in 1878, when I was on the Monetary Conference in Paris, to prophesy that there must be a depression of prices through the demonetisation of silver in all the countries in Europe. I looked upon it with alarm, and I think my prophecy has been justified. I do not think the right hon. Gentleman should be so satisfied with the progress of commerce during the last 10 or 15 years as he seems inclined to be. We have not been advancing with those leaps and bounds with which we did advance in former times; and it is the conviction of a vast number of people, and of men who are competent to judge, that the contraction of the currency has had the effect, which it has always been declared

must be its effect—namely, a fall in prices. That is very much to the benefit of holders of sovereigns, and to the detriment of those who have to find the means to pay the sovereigns. Can we be surprised that the agricultural community and the operatives of Lancashire, who feel the pinch in a different way, say, “Law, and not nature, has made it necessary for us to produce more in order to pay our debts, and, therefore, we do not think it unreasonable that currency legislation should take place, by which the legal, the Government causes—not the natural causes—which we are ready to accept—may be remedied?” I am not prepared to say that on that account we should undertake the tremendous change which bi-metallism would bring about; but it does seem to me to justify us in exhausting every effort to see whether, by a greater introduction of silver, we should not be able to counteract to a certain extent the evils which I must say I believe to exist. The right hon. Gentleman spoke of the fixity of gold. What is felt so much now, when we are asked whether we will tamper with our currency, is that our currency has been tampered with already by causes beyond our own control. I saw an eloquent passage by an able writer which I will quote to the House—

“English prices are as certainly dependent on foreign currency legislation as the level of the waters in the four seas is dependent on the level of the Atlantic. We may refuse to have a share in determining the world's monetary policy, but we cannot avoid being vitally affected thereby.”

Shall we continue to take a share in the world's monetary policy? Here is an opportunity. There is a Conference sitting, and ought we not to do what we can to ask them once more to resume their labours? We need not be frightened by the suggestion of the right hon. Gentleman opposite, that because the United States summoned the Conference they are now bound to take the initiative in summoning it again.

MR. W. E. GLADSTONE was understood to say his statement was that the United States must take the initiative in the matter of the Conference.

MR. GOSCHEN: We are most anxious to impress upon Her Majesty's Government the urgent desirability of continuing these negotiations.

Mr. Goschen

SIR W. HARCOURT: What negotiations?

MR. GOSCHEN: The right hon. Gentleman asks what negotiations. The right hon. Gentleman must not stand at words. If he does not wish to say "negotiations," at all events, let us continue in the Conference, and attempt to solve questions in which Lancashire is deeply interested; in which India is vitally interested; and in which labour more and more begins to feel an interest. The right hon. Gentleman must know right well what negotiations took place. We want a further honest attempt on the part of our delegates to see whether they cannot assist in a solution of these questions. Let the Chancellor of the Exchequer call in Lord Herschell, who said that it was desirable we should communicate with the nations of the world. Do not let us give up this task. I hope I have convinced the House on two points. The one is, that this is not simply a bimetallic question. We have not got in gold at the present moment, unaided by silver, that standard of value, that fixity which the right hon. Gentleman attributes to it, and which we all desire to have. We wish to sustain gold, and to put gold back again into that position that silver may be able to do more work under it than silver has been able to do during late years. Surely that is a task in which we may ask Her Majesty's Government to assist us, and I hope, in the name of those great interests I have mentioned, that they will do so. And I may add to those interests the question of labour. The right hon. Gentleman pointed to the fact that the price of labour had risen all over the country, and he said that the price of labour having risen was a proof that there was no appreciation of gold. In the same way, as right hon. Gentlemen with perfect propriety say, that the ingenuity of man, that discoveries and many other circumstances have contributed to the fall in prices, in which we contend that the appreciation of gold plays a considerable part, so we may contend that that increase in the price of labour, which is satisfactory from the national point of view, has come about in spite of the appreciation of gold through many other circumstances; by the combined action which has taken place in many parts of the country, and by the determination of

the working classes to take a larger share in the profits of the business in which they are engaged than they had hitherto done. What would have been material would have been to show whether, when the value of labour had increased, the profits of employers had not been diminished. And when the right hon. Gentleman pointed to the amount of cotton now imported, let us be grateful for the employment that it gives to the manufacturing population, but let us also ask whether that employment is upon such a remunerative basis to all concerned, that the great industry of Lancashire will be able to hold out against the bounty which is given to India. Has labour no interest in this question? If there is a further appreciation of gold—and those who are very competent to speak believe that if silver continues to be excluded a further appreciation of gold will follow—what is to be the position in India? That question must be dealt with, whether this Conference at Brussels comes to an agreement or not. But, looking to the further appreciation of gold, it means that everyone who owes a pound has to give more to pay that pound than he has paid heretofore. I say this is a question of national importance. It is a question which, notwithstanding the delightfully bright tones of the speech of the Prime Minister, he will acknowledge is one which those who believe there are serious dangers in the present situation are entitled to bring before the House of Commons. We should be almost neglecting our duty if we were not to do so. I hope I have not been betrayed into any extravagant statement in what I have said. I have been most anxious to put some considerations before the House on the other side of the question, because it is impossible that these great issues can be settled simply by the dogmatic statement that everything connected with bimetallicism—and it is a pity that the name of bimetallicism has been so prominent in the matter—is a dream and is Utopian. The question is far too grave for that, and I shall venture to do what little I can to continue to contribute to a solution of this question, and I believe the more the matter is discussed, the more urgency will there appear that some further plans—plans which are more or less shadowed out even in the Report of the Royal

Commission—should be accepted by the nations of the world, who will be more than grateful to any English Government which would co-operate with them.

\*MR. E. W. BECKETT (York, N.R., Whitby) : I rise, Sir, for the purpose of proposing the Amendment which stands in my name, and which reads as follows :—

To leave out from the word "That," to the end of the Question, and add "seeing that the deliberations of the International Monetary Conference mainly turned on the question of bimetallism ; that after protracted sittings no agreement could be arrived at by the representatives of the assembled Powers ; and that any interference with the single monetary standard now by law established in this country is open to the gravest objections, this House thinks it inexpedient that the Government should take any steps to procure the re-assembly of that Conference."

I hope it will not be thought an act of presumption on my part that I should join in the discussion of this most important and complicated subject. I can only plead in excuse that I have some slight practical knowledge of it, and, like all who have practical knowledge of it, I am filled with misgiving and alarm by the rash and dangerous proposals made by those who, for very insufficient reasons and with little discernment of the consequences, would alter the basis upon which our monetary system rests. There is one advantage I enjoy in this Debate, which is that I do not think it would be possible for the bimetallists to advance any argument I have not heard before. I do not require to be posted up on the subject by professors at the Westminster Palace Hotel. I have had the honour of being present at bimetallic breakfasts and banquets. I have heard the most distinguished bimetallists state their case with the cool precision of the morning and with the inflammatory enthusiasm of the evening. I have sat at the feet of the Gamaliel of Bimetallism, M. Cerundir, and I have been exposed to the blandishments of my right hon. Friend the late Minister for Agriculture, and, in spite of all this, I remain unconverted, and am anxious to say a word on behalf of that system under which this country has achieved unexampled prosperity. Sir, this Resolution invites the Government to take steps to procure the re-assembly of the International Monetary Conference. I should have thought that no one who

had read the Report of our Delegates and who had studied the views of the various countries represented could for a moment anticipate that the re-assembly of the Conference would lead to any practical result. Eleven years ago a Conference met and separated without arriving at any decision. Last year the Conference met and separated without arriving at any decision. What reason is there for thinking that a Conference this year or next year would be any more likely to meet with better success ? As a matter of fact, it is certain that nothing would or could be agreed upon. What does the Report say ?—

"Upon the attitude of the Latin Union to a great extent the situation turned. A partial bimetallic agreement might have been within the range of possibility had these States been willing to enter it. But M. Tirard—Delegate of France, and speaking on behalf of Belgium, Italy, and Greece—declared himself opposed to any union for the adoption of bimetallism unless such union included Great Britain, Germany, Austria, and Russia."

And the Report goes on to say that—

"Unless there should be a radical change in the declared monetary policy of Great Britain, Germany, Austria, and Russia, an International agreement for fixing a ratio between the values of gold and silver must be regarded as beyond the range of practical politics. Without such radical change there is no prospect of the realisation of the conditions which, in the opinion of the bimetallists themselves, are necessary for the establishment of an efficient bimetallic system by International agreement."

In the face of such a declaration as this, I think the Government which sought, without there being any change in the situation or the views of the Powers assembled, to procure the re-assembly of the Conference would only stultify itself ; and though I cannot be suspected of any undue desire to see the credit and reputation of the present Government maintained at any high pitch at home, I confess I should be sorry to see it exposed to rebuffs or ridicule abroad. But, Sir, the House sees through this Resolution. It is intended not so much to procure the re-assembly of the Conference as to evoke an expression of opinion in this House on the subject of bimetallism. Under its innocent phraseology it conceals a deadly intent, and I must say I should have thought more of the courage of the bimetallists—who, to do them justice, are not, as a rule, wanting in courage—if they had come

*Mr. Goschen*

boldly out to fight in the open, instead of skirmishing behind a Resolution which they would say does not commit those who vote for it to a decided opinion one way or the other. But let the House beware of their wiles. They are a canny folk, and their insidious advances should be eyed with suspicion. What they want is nothing more or less than to substitute a double basis for the single basis on which our monetary system now stands. That sounds simple enough, but the effect of such a change it would be almost impossible to exaggerate. Consider the state of society in this country in all its grades and orders connected by financial arrangements to an extent and on a scale never exceeded in any country; consider the landed and propertied interest bound on one side by leases and on the other by mortgages and settlements, all expressed in money; consider our manufactures and commerce all dependent on, and existing by, one fixed and ordered system of pecuniary credit; consider the public debts and taxes and revenues, calculated on a known and ascertained basis, and, considering all these things, I ask if you can conceive any change more certain to produce extensive disorders, more pregnant with the seeds of derangement, danger, and calamity than the one which the bimetalists with so light a heart recommend us to adopt. Governments have been proverbially slow and reluctant to touch or tamper with the currency, and nothing can excuse their doing so but the prevalence of the most terrible evils and the pressure of the most urgent necessity. Do we stand in such a case now? I am not concerned to deny the existence of the present depression in trade. Unfortunately, the reality of it is too manifest to be denied. But the bimetalists have to show two things: first, that the depression is due to our gold standard; second, that by associating silver with gold, the depression will be removed, and the possibility of its recurrence is so remote that it need not be taken into consideration. Being, as I said, bold men, they apparently adopt both these theses; but they do not support them by arguments that will convince any practical man. If the depression is due to our possessing but a single standard of value, then as we have lived under a single standard of value since the year 1816 the

depression ought to have lasted from that time to this. But as the development and progress of the country since 1816 has been marvellous and wholly unexampled in our history, one is almost tempted to believe that the maintenance of our single standard has had something to do with them. "Oh, but," say the bimetalists, "you had the advantage of the bimetallic system being kept in operation by the Latin Union up to 1873. What has happened since 1873?" Well, Sir, what has happened since 1873? And what happened before 1873? One would think to hear the bimetalists talk that before 1873 there was the Saturnian age—an era of smiling content, of universal unremitting prosperity. It is true, as I have just said, that there was wonderful progress and steady increase of wealth; but there were also periods of stagnation, periods of exhaustion, when we seemed to be going back instead of going forward. On looking back through *Hansard* one is surprised to see the frequency and regularity, and I may add the similarity, of Debates on agricultural distress and commercial depression, in which the same statements are made, the same grievances paraded, the same complaint uttered; and, furthermore, the same remedies suggested, among which proposals for tampering with the currency constantly recur. Well, Sir, that is before 1873 when the bimetallic system was in full swing, and, therefore, if it had possessed the magic powers attributed to it, distress and depression would have been banished altogether from those countries which fell within the range of its beneficent influence. Anticipating a possible objection, I may say that France no more enjoyed a happy immunity from distress and depression than England. And since 1873 how do we stand? Has there been no advance? Have we had no fat years? Did 1873 sound the knell of our commercial prosperity? There is no fairer test of the general prosperity of the country than the Income Tax Returns. Let us apply this test. In 1870-1 the gross assessments under Schedules D and E amounted to £215,888,000; in 1890-1 they rose to the total of £399,298,000. And when we remember that during these 20 years the limit of exemption has been raised from £100 to £150, and that



abatements have been granted, first of £80 upon incomes under £300, and then of £120 on incomes under £400, this means that the gross assessable income has been nearly doubled during that period, and the vast increase in the Post Office and Savings Banks Returns year by year, fully discounting the increased facilities now offered, proves that the collective wealth of the working classes is also growing at a prodigious rate. How, with these facts staring them in the face, the bimetallists can seriously contend that our adherence to a single gold standard is paralysing our industries and bringing the country to ruin passes the wit of any ordinary mortal to understand. But then I am aware that one of the most cherished and continually repeated theories of the bimetallists is that all who do not agree with them suffer from a congenital stupidity, which no doubt does prevent us from seeing things that are quite clear and easy to the illuminated intelligence of the advocates of a double standard. Another favourite argument these gentlemen employ is that a double standard gives stability to silver, and consequently stability to the prices of commodities. This argument implies an assumption that hardly rests on facts, the assumption being that there is a necessary connection between the fall in prices and the fall in the gold value of silver. It is true that there has been a fall in both since 1873, but we find that a fall in one does not always correspond with a fall in the other; on the contrary, that sometimes a fall in one is coincident with a rise in the other. This is unfortunate, because the farmer has been taught to believe that the fall in the price of his produce is due to the fall in silver, and that bimetallism is the true remedy for agricultural distress, inasmuch as by rehabilitating silver it would send up the price of corn. But the price of corn does not move in sympathy with the price of silver. In 1873 there was a fall in silver and a rise in corn; in 1874 and 1875 there was a slight fall in silver and a heavy fall in wheat; in 1876 there was a big drop in silver: and a slight rise in wheat; in 1877 a slight rise in silver and a big jump in wheat; in 1884 there was a big drop in wheat, while silver remained steady; in 1891 a fall in silver with a great jump in wheat,

and in 1891, with silver at 45d. per oz., wheat was higher than in 1884, when silver stood at 50d. per oz. I have seen the price of wheat tabulated from the year 1774 to 1873, and, to avoid wearying the House by quoting statistics, I must ask hon. Gentlemen to take my word for it that there have been in those 100 years fluctuations far more violent and extreme than any that have occurred since 1873.

Notice taken, that 40 Members were not present; House counted, and 40 Members being found present,

Mr. BECKETT: Before 1875 the price of silver was fairly steady, but when bimetallism was assisted by Protection it did not prevent the price of corn from touching 108s. at one time and dropping to 35s. at another. I think most hon. Gentlemen will admit that the immense extension of the wheat-growing areas of the world, joined with increased facilities for transit and low freights, have much more to do with the fall in the price of corn than the suspension of free coinage of silver in 1873. And I think it is no real kindness to the farmer, when he so greatly stands in need of immediate help, to teach him to look for relief to a quarter from which no help can possibly come. But he is shrewder than his friends imagine, and though he may mumble the dry husks of bimetallism, the Agricultural Conference showed it is the succulent bread of Protection that he really desires; and certainly from his point of view he knows which of the two is best for him. Bimetallism cannot, then, insure stability in the prices of commodities which vary according to the law of supply and demand; therefore, it is of secondary concern to us to know whether it insures stability in the price of silver, inasmuch as the price of silver does not, and cannot, regulate the price of commodities. That it cannot do so will be evident when we consider that silver is itself a commodity. Some gentlemen seem to imagine that there is a sort of natural necessary wedlock between gold and silver; that in the beginning they were tied together by the hand of Providence, and have been separated by the hand of man. But there is no more reason in the nature of things that they should be united as a standard than that gold should be united with copper or tin

*Mr. E. W. Beckett*

as a standard. Silver was chosen for purposes of convenience, and as token money has a great part to play; but to exalt silver to the level of gold and expect it to do what gold does is as reasonable as to put a costermonger into the Cabinet and expect him to do the work of a Cabinet Minister. A double standard seems to me a contradiction in terms. The more simple the standard the better. Its very name implies simplicity and unity. It is the measure of value, and why not have one measure of value just as you have one measure of length and capacity? You cannot find a ratio that will unite the two metals on a lasting basis and remain steady under all shocks and chances. It has been tried in England, and England had to give it up; it has been tried in France, and France had to give it up. What virtue is there in a ratio of  $15\frac{1}{2}$  to 1? If you can fix the ratio of silver to gold, why not make it equal to gold, weight for weight? If you can fix the value of silver by law, why not fix the value of corn by law? Why not fix the value of everything by law? Bimetallists are invited to prove that it is more possible to fix the value of two quantities like gold and silver by law than that of two quantities like gold and corn or gold and anything else. And this is just what they never do and never can, prove, and so they talk, and so we do not believe it. From the reign of Elizabeth to 1774 silver and gold were legal tender at a fixed ratio to an unlimited amount. During that period the legal ratio was hardly ever the market ratio. At first gold advanced, and, in consequence, people discharged their obligations in silver, and gold was in danger of being driven out of the country. In the time of William III. gold fell and became cheapest, so people discharged their obligations in gold. In 1783 gold again advanced and gradually appreciated in value, till in the year 1774, when the bimetallic system was terminated, it commanded a premium of 39 per cent. That is what happened when bimetalism existed in this country. What has happened in France and the Latin Union? They tried bimetalism, and they have abandoned bimetalism, and are in no hurry to return to it. Bimetalism broke down, and the cause of its breakdown was that when pressure came, when the market was flooded with

silver, they found that the fixed ratio could not be maintained if they wished to protect their gold. Their gold was being drawn away in such quantities that it was only by the suspension of their bimetallic system that they were able to prevent it from leaving the country altogether. I do not think much of the stability of a system that can only sail in smooth water. Can it be supposed that a single gold standard was adopted by Germany, Holland, Norway, Sweden, and Italy, and now by Austria, and that the double standard was abandoned by the Latin Union without good reason? This is a question on which authority counts for much. I might quote a long list of the highest authorities who have pronounced most decisively against bimetalism; but I will content myself with two, whose opinions always command respect in this House—Adam Smith and Sir Robert Peel. Adam Smith, who had had practical experience of the working of bimetalism, said, "It is a great evil to have two metallic standards of value to an unlimited extent." Sir Robert Peel, who shares with the Prime Minister the honour of being the greatest Parliamentary financier of the present century, said—

"Every sound writer has come to the same conclusion with Sir Isaac Newton (another great authority), that a certain weight of gold bullion with an impression on it denoting it to be of that certain weight and of a certain fineness, constitutes the only true, intelligible, and adequate standard of value. The notion of a double standard is totally fallacious and would be found impracticable in effect; nor has it ever been for a moment entertained by Mr. Loche or any others who have advocated a silver standard."

And at the present moment go into the City, go to the banking, go to the great financial, houses whose operations extend to all the corners of the earth, and they will tell you that for England bimetalism spells loss and disaster, for in the words of Mr. Alfred de Rothschild

"England owes a great part of her enormous wealth to the confidence which her monetary system has inspired both at home and abroad—confidence based on the fact that our bank note represents sovereigns, and that a bill drawn upon England from any part of the world will at maturity be payable in the same metal."

Against this enormous mass of expert opinion what have the bimetalists got to set off? Sir, they have nothing

to set off against it but threadbare theories and wild and windy prophecies of an El Dorado where silver is to be as gold. As a matter of fact, it is impossible for a double standard to be maintained for long at a fixed ratio. Yes, say the bimetallicists, it is possible if all Governments agree. Governments, Sir, are powerless in such matters. No Government can make the people take coin they do not want. The United States is a silver-producing country. They make laws to maintain the price of silver; but its use cannot be forced upon the public. We have also had an illustration of that at home not long ago. The Treasury awoke one day to the fact that there was a loss on half sovereigns and a large profit to be made out of crowns and double florins, so they endeavoured to substitute as far as they could crowns and double florins for half sovereigns. But it was no use, crowns and double florins could not be forced into circulation. The people would not take them. What is the use of talking about unlimited coinage of silver when nobody will take silver except for pocket-money? If a bank cashier were to try to compel a man to take £5, £10, £20, or £100 worth of silver away with him the customer would laugh in his face, and probably remove himself and his account at the same time. "Oh! but," say the bimetallicists, "we would issue silver certificates." If for those certificates you could only get silver, they would soon be inconvertible notes. And we know what happens to inconvertible notes. In 1797 the Bank of England issued inconvertible notes, and Parliament tried by heavy penalties to keep them at par and failed. The French Convention denounced the penalty of death against all who refused to take the assignment at par, but failed miserably. If, on the other hand, these certificates were changeable into silver or gold at will they would be practically gold certificates, resting on a gold basis, and only circulating because they represented gold. People and Governments want gold because their ordinary business cannot be carried on without gold, and because in certain emergencies gold is an absolute necessity. Governments must have gold to fill their war chests. Silver will not suit the purpose. So clearly do they recognise this that as soon as they find their stock of gold beginning to be depleted they take

steps to protect it at once. What did France care for the bimetallic system when she found that her gold was being drained away? Whenever there was any extra demand for gold you would have to pay premium for gold, and then what becomes of your bimetallic par? Supposing that bimetallicism were established at the ratio of 15½ to 1, what would happen? The output of silver would be enormously increased. The banks and Mints would be flooded with silver, and it is obvious that people would not put silver in to take silver out. They would take out gold, which would very rapidly be driven to a high premium. Again, no edict that any Government or all Governments could issue would alter the natural preference in the heart of man, and of woman too, for gold. The demand for gold ornaments—loquets, brooches, and watches—would be insatiable. Every one who had silver dishes, cups, candlesticks, or plate of any kind would rush with it to the Mint to have it melted down, and receive gold in exchange. Under such circumstances, does anyone suppose that the bimetallic par could be maintained for a year, for a month, for a day? All the legislation in the world will avail nothing against a law that would be so certain in its operation that it might almost be called a law of nature. Well, then, what are we to do? Is the appreciation of gold to be allowed to go on unchecked? Certainly, anything is better than tampering with the currency; anything is better than attempting to escape from present and, I hope, temporary, evils by depreciating our standard of value, which would lead to evils far greater than any we endure now. Of such an attempt, Mr. Huskisson, speaking early in the century, said—

"If we are unable to rescue many of its victims from the ruin it has brought upon them, at least let it be a warning never to be forgotten against any future tampering with the standard value of the currency."

What are we to gain by the depreciation of the currency, and where is it to stop? Depreciation in the currency is always a sign of financial weakness—a danger-signal which spreads dismay. If a depreciated currency is to be so ardently desired, the Argentine Republic—where a dollar has sunk to the value of 1s.—

must be the land to which hon. Gentlemen turn their eyes full of envy and admiration. Prices there have gone up by leaps and bounds, and yet somehow no one seems to be any better off, and the country, so far from becoming more rich and prosperous, is rapidly tending towards bankruptcy. I suppose hon. Gentlemen would say, "This is carrying matters too far. We only want a little depreciation; not too much, but just enough." What is enough? Is 10 per cent. enough or 20; then why not 25, or 30, or 100?—the same arguments apply in every case. No, Sir; once begin to depreciate the currency, and you cannot set bounds or limits to its possible decline in value. You cannot tell where it will stop, or what mischief it will do. It is like the letting out of water. At first only a few drops may percolate, but behind them comes a flood that will overthrow the barriers and sweep everything away. The bimetallists attribute the appreciation of gold—that is the fall in prices—to a scarcity of gold. I say without hesitation that there is no scarcity of gold. There is an ample supply of gold in the world for all purposes of business and commerce. I point to the Bank rate as a proof of what I say. No man who wants gold is refused gold if he can pay value for it. Bimetallists who have studied this question theoretically do not understand that the value of gold depends not only on the quantity of gold itself, but on the aggregate of gold and all promises to pay gold. The extension and development of credit which our monometallic system has produced, fostered, and stimulated, with all its attendant machinery of bills, cheques, notes, and promises to pay in gold, has placed at our disposal means and resources expansive and elastic enough to satisfy all the needs of individuals, all the requirements of trade and commerce; and the bimetallists cannot produce such evidence as would be necessary to support the conclusion that this fall in prices is due to a scarcity in gold. Any such cause would operate with tolerable uniformity over the whole field of prices, when, as a matter of fact, some have fallen, some have remained stationary, and some have risen. In every case where a fall has occurred some specific and satisfactory reason can be adduced for it other than the scarcity of gold. And it is a

striking fact that when there has been no change or cheapening in the conditions of production; and when the demand has kept pace with the supply there has been no fall in the price whatever. Admitting the appreciation of gold, is it such an unmixed evil? We must consider the effect it has on all classes, especially the most numerous and needy classes of the community. I have already quoted figures which testify to the immense increase of wealth in this country. If incomes have doubled during the last 20 years, and the purchasing power of those incomes has increased by 30 or 35 per cent. surely this is not a result to grumble at and deplore. The working classes are vitally interested in this matter, and perhaps more so than any other class. The general level of wages is higher than it was 20 years ago, and they receive those wages in an appreciated currency—they are paid in sovereigns, and, therefore, their spending power is increased by 30 to 35 per cent. Sir Robert Peel asked what is £1? The bimetallists say £1 is to be 16s. Let them go to the working man and tell him that the value of every £1 he receives is to be knocked down to 16s., and see what he has to say in reply. The chief sufferer by the depreciation of the currency would be the working man. The rate of wages would not be increased simultaneously with the reduced value of money. It is by no means certain that it would be increased at all; but it is certain that the price of labour does not vary so rapidly as the price of commodities, and the working man would have to pay more for everything he bought, and it would be some time before he had more money in his pocket to pay with. All classes but one would suffer from the depreciation of the currency, but undoubtedly the working classes would suffer most. What is the class I exempted from the general suffering? It is the debtor class—a large and important and respectable class, among which is to be numbered many of the worthy agriculturists who are such hot advocates of bimetallism. I admit that the debtor class are deserving of consideration, and even of encouragement, for most businesses are carried on, most new enterprises are started, on borrowed money. But I do not think

even the debtor class would derive unmixed advantage from bimetallism, or that they have lost so much by the appreciation of gold as they imagine. For the reasons I have given business men would not believe that silver could be permanently maintained on a par with gold. They would take precautions against a possible fall, and creditors as would protect themselves in this country by the same expedient as they have resorted to in America. The International Conference were informed that "it is stipulated in all contracts for a long term, such as mortgage deeds, that payment must be made in gold, i.e., in gold coin of the United States of the denomination weight and standard at present current, or its equivalent. Those who will not accept this condition are unable to borrow." Then, Sir, depreciation of currency means contraction of credit, which would not suit debtors at all. Debtors, generally speaking, have to put up cover for their loans, and have to pledge mortgages, bonds, and securities of all kinds. Now, the value of these securities, all expressed in gold, would depreciate as gold depreciated, and bankers and others would therefore have to curtail, reduce, and limit their advances according to the measure of the depreciation in gold. This would hardly stimulate business or add to the prosperity of the country. Again, as long as debtors pay away in interest less than half of their incomes, they have not lost, but gained, by the appreciation of gold. Say the debtor has an income of £100, and that he has a fixed charge of £40 upon it. That £40, by the appreciation of gold to the extent of 30 per cent., becomes equivalent to £52, which he has to pay; but the remaining £60 becomes equivalent to £78, which he has to receive, so that he is better off by £6 than he was before. So the debtors are not in such a bad case as they imagine, and the change to bimetallism might easily do them more harm than good. There remains but the creditor to be considered, and I would like, in conclusion, to say a word on behalf of him. It is not denied that this movement is aimed at him; it is not denied that he is to be paid in a depreciated currency, and that, therefore, he will receive less than he is entitled to. You ask us to break faith with the public creditor. You dismiss

him in your elegant transatlantic phraseology with the contemptuous epithet of "gold bug." The profession to which I belong is especially singled out for attack. For what is a banker? A banker is a person who for a trifling consideration takes care of the money of the public. We are trustees for the public, and it is because we see clearly how greatly the public would suffer by the depreciation of the currency, what confusion it would create in trade, what disorganisation and uncertainty it would give rise to in business, that we resist the plots and plans of those who seek to gain a doubtful and temporary advantage for themselves and their class at the cost of enormous public suffering. Bankers feel bad times as much as anyone else. Look at the banking returns for last year. Bankers are best suited when business is brisk, traders full of enterprise and confidence, money in good demand, rates of interest remunerative, which things do not, as a rule, accompany appreciating money. Sir, we have no interests apart from the public interests. We are not so much creditors as the guardians of the creditors. What is a creditor? Every man who has a sum of money to his credit, whether in Consols, Railway Stocks, Banks, Friendly or Building Societies, or such things as houses or lands that can be turned into money is a creditor, and you cannot strike at the creditor without striking at the overwhelming majority of the people of England. England itself is a creditor country. Think of the vast sums invested abroad, put by some as high as £400,000,000, and by some much higher—all payable in gold. By a stroke of the pen you knock £100,000,000 or more off the national wealth. But that is not all. The Deputy for Russia said in eloquent language—

"One of the sources of England's strength is that she has become the monetary centre of the world, the place where you may be always certain of getting payment in gold. This is now one of the conditions of her greatness; interfere with that certainty, and you will break one of the conditions of her greatness."

Another condition of her greatness is that under every trial and temptation England has always kept her faith inviolate. England is the model and type of financial honesty, and her credit

stands higher than that of any other nation in the world. She has inspired such absolute confidence in her good faith that she can command the most favourable terms in every market, and is able to borrow money at a lower rate of interest than any other country. This is a position and an advantage not to be lightly thrown away. The depreciation of the currency by an Act of the Legislature would amount to little short of a legal fraud on the public creditor, and would be most prejudicial to our public credit. The public creditor derives his title from the same source as that which gives to every subject of the realm security in what he possesses, and that source is the guarantee of the good faith of the State. Many hon. Gentlemen who support this Motion belong to the Conservative Party, and I would ask them to remember that property of any kind is only the creation of law. Are not all the means of possession established and upheld by law, administered and enjoyed according to law; and can you make an inroad on one without endangering the whole? Your blow may be aimed at one corner of the edifice only, but its recoil, depend upon it, will inflict frightful injury on the whole fabric. I do not wish to use exaggerated language. I do not say we should be permanently and irretrievably ruined by bimetallism; but I do say that if we depreciate our currency we make a breach in the most honourable record of financial integrity that the world has ever seen; that we should open the door to a host of evils, great and small, immediate and remote; and should be committing an act which would damage our credit, diminish our resources, reduce our national wealth, and be a stain on our national honour.

MR. E. B. HOARE (Hampstead) said he rose to second the Amendment, and he had very little to add to the exhaustive speech just made by his hon. Friend.

Notice taken, that 40 Members were not present; House counted, and 40 Members being found present,

\*MR. E. B. HOARE, continuing, said the bimetalists always reminded him of the mediæval alchemists who, with a desire to enrich the world, sought continually after the "philosopher's stone," but always failed to find it. The objects

which the bimetalists set before them were twofold: The first was the raising of the value of the rupee and the improvement of the exchange of India, while the other was the raising of prices everywhere, and especially in this country. The first object was always based upon the most philanthropic motives. The House had been told by the hon. Baronet who moved the Resolution that India was suffering bitterly under the depression of the rupee, and that increased taxation would be a dreadful burden upon the people of India. There was no doubt whatever that a fall in the value of the rupee was inconvenient, and that it might possibly be a source of danger to the Indian Government. It was also a fact that it caused very grave loss to very many estimable Government officials in India, who, receiving their pay in rupees, had to remit it home to England. But what was the case with regard to the natives of India? He held in his hand a Blue Book published about four years ago, in which the following passage occurred:—

"So far as ordinary tests can be applied, the average Indian landowner, trader, ryot, or handicraftsman is better off than he was 30 years ago. He consumes more salt, more sugar, more tobacco, and far more imported luxuries and conveniences than he did a generation back. Where house to house inquiries have been made, it has been found that the average villager eats more food and has a better house than his father; that to a considerable extent brass and other metal vessels have taken the place of the coarse earthenware vessels of earlier times, and that his family possess more clothes than formerly."

This statement gave an authentic picture of the condition of the natives, and showed that it was one of rapidly increasing prosperity. The burdens of taxation had to be measured, not only by the amount of the taxation, but also by the capacity of the people to bear it. On this point he would read another extract from the very valuable Blue Book he had just quoted—

"The total increase in the gross land revenue during the past 30 years has been from Rs17,903,000 to Rs23,653,000. This increase of 32 per cent. in the land revenue has been concurrent with a rise of nearly 100 per cent. in the value of the gross agricultural yield in consequence of the extension of cultivation, of the rise in prices, of increased irrigation facilities, and of the introduction of new staples. In the year 1856 the land revenue was more than one-half of the total public income of the country;

now it is less than one-third of the total revenues, so that the basis of the public income is broader than it was, and the comparative incidence of the revenue upon the land is lighter."

He thought those two paragraphs were a tolerably conclusive answer to the question of how the present state of things was affecting the people of India. The people of India were prospering under the present *régime*. They were now growing corn, which they did not formerly grow, and their cotton and other industries were rapidly advancing. His bimetallic friends might say that they did not want to have India competing with our Manchester manufacturers. That, of course, would be perfectly intelligible, but they could not have it both ways; they could not be perfectly philanthropic to India and at the same time philanthropic to our fellow-countrymen. If the bimetallics were going to raise the value of silver with the view of improving the position of our fellow-countrymen, with the result of injuring our fellow-subjects in India, that would be no doubt intelligible, but it could hardly be described as philanthropic. He maintained that they had no right to tamper with their currency. The hardships from which officials in India were suffering ought to be met by some adjustment by which they could remit their exchanges home at a reasonable rate—and unless that were done the Government of India would fail to get that high class of officials it had hitherto obtained. The House knew, however, that the Indian question was a mere piece of by-play. What was really wanted was to raise prices in this country. There was no harm in low prices in themselves, for self-adjustment would shortly come round. The question was not what a man was to get for his goods, but what profit he was going to make by his transactions. It was said that what was wanted was to stop the fall in prices. With falling prices it was very difficult to have a prosperous trade, but he did not admit that by an artificial bolstering up of prices they could make trade prosper. The only effect would be a great fall of prices afterwards. Prices would adjust themselves by a natural law, and if people tried to adjust them and sent political economy to Saturn, as had been done before with very evil results, they would only make matters

worse. The proposal before the House, although the Amendment was not so worded, was that there should be an international agreement to make silver and gold a legal tender at a certain fixed price, so as to have a certain ratio, the one to the other. But at what price? No one had yet answered that question. If there were an agreement throughout the world that all nations should purchase silver at the price of the day—say, 38d. per ounce—the free coinage of silver at that rate would stereotype the Indian exchange, and if they did that it would benefit neither the Indian Government nor Indian officials. Would it increase the money in circulation? No. A wealthy country like this was always saturated with money. There was always in the pockets of the people as much money as the people required. By that he did not mean as much as one would wish to have, but as much as one had the pecuniary means of getting. There was no difficulty whatever in getting that ordinary small change which they carried about in their pockets, and that was the only money used. The Prime Minister said that they had got beyond the stage of barter. On the contrary, he held they had got back to barter. They did not use gold in their daily contracts, except to pay for their dinners and their cab fares. It was a false notion that they ever paid or received a great amount of gold in the ordinary business of life. If silver was freely sent to the Mint and freely coined, who was going to use it? Who was going to ask his banker to give him £10 worth of silver? No one, except for the purpose of paying his workmen. There was such a thing as the Gresham Law, which showed that if a nation put into circulation an inferior currency it would drive the superior currency out of the country. In early life, some 40 years ago, he was travelling with his father in France, and his father gave him a bag full of 5f. pieces to take with him—and he left it behind. What did his father, who was a reasonable man, want a heavy bag of 5f. pieces for? Because he could not get anything else. They were at that time under bimetallicism in France, and that was the sort of thing that would happen in this country if they were to have a gold and silver currency next year. The result would be a

useless mass of silver accumulating in the Mint, and the producers of silver would always have a perfectly solvent and willing purchaser for the whole of their produce. They would know that, whatever might be the state of the market, they would always be sure of getting for their silver 38d. per ounce. Suppose there was a silver mine where they were producing silver at 1s. an ounce, and they could sell it for 3s. 2d., he would like to be the owner of such a mine as that. By bimetallism they would not increase the currency; what they would increase was the production of silver, and what they would diminish was the ordinary amount of silver which would come upon the silver market if they gave it fair play. The remedy for the present state of things might be found elsewhere. He had often thought it exceedingly likely that China might open a perfectly insatiable gulf for silver; but the hope of such a thing would be checked to a certainty if we were to put an artificial price upon silver. The Chinese people were at this moment carrying about with them what they called "cash"—a heavy copper coinage. It would be of immense advantage to the Chinese to have a silver substitute. If they put a high artificial price on silver the existing evils would be intensified. There would be no hope of maintaining either the price or the currency. It was said that an international agreement on the subject was perfectly possible. He believed that nations, like individuals, were actuated very much by their own self-interest, and when he looked at the different positions in which nations stood he did not believe that any such agreement would be kept. The United States was the principal producer of silver, and their principal object was a good market. In France, of course, it was the interest of the Bank of France to get other people's necks into the same noose as they had got their own into. The position of England was adverse to that of either the United States or of France, because they had no large store of silver such as the others had. In these circumstances, how was it possible that they could have any permanent interest in common with them in this question? The reason why he supported the Amendment was because he objected to this question being kept

open. In his opinion, it ought to be settled at once for good and all. The proposal to establish a system of bimetallism was impracticable, and if adopted it would necessarily lead to confusion and to loss. The Monetary Conference had come to the conclusion that they could do nothing in the matter, and he trusted that that evening's Debate might put an end to what he looked upon as a very mischievous agitation.

#### Amendment proposed,

To leave out from the word "That," to the end of the Question, in order to add the words "seeing that the deliberations of the International Monetary Conference mainly turned on the question of bimetallism; that after protracted sittings no agreement could be arrived at by the representatives of the assembled Powers; and that any interference with the single monetary standard now by Law established in this country is open to the gravest objections, this House thinks it inexpedient that the Government should take any steps to procure the re-assembly of that Conference,"—  
(*Mr. Beckett*.)

—instead thereof.

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question."

\***MR. HOWELL** (Bethnal Green, N.E.) said he would merely detain the House for a short time in dealing with the proposal of the hon. Member the Mover of the Amendment. He admitted that those who ventured to speak on this question felt the same difficulty with which the Conference found itself burdened. The Conference found it difficult to get beyond general discussion. He held the view that what they wanted was a stable rate of exchange. That was, in his opinion, what lay at the root of the whole question. The difficulty seemed to be that some countries used gold as a standard measure of value, and others used silver. This had been interpreted as meaning a double standard—something differing one from another. That was not the view of those with whom he (*Mr. Howell*) agreed. They held that the measure of value should be one uniform standard. They should have an equivalent value all round if they wished to promote the prosperity of the great nations of the world. They could not slur over the question of India, which was a most important part of the British Empire. To say nothing of the resources of its vast area, it had a population of



280,000,000 of people. Why should they not have one standard of value between India and the Mother Country? They should have it, whether they were to call it in England the £1 sterling or in India the rupee. Some gentlemen on both sides, he thought, had dwelt upon the prosperity of India. He did not know how they measured that prosperity in regard to this question; but India's position relatively to England was a grave matter. There could be no doubt that India had progressed, and he hoped, and many would join in that hope, that she might continue to progress. But India had progressed owing to British gold being poured into that country, but she had certainly not progressed at the rate she ought to have done in her trade with the Mother Country, for having a silver currency she had found the natural outlet for her produce in countries like China and Japan, which, like herself, also had a silver currency, and her trade with them had grown out of all proportion to that with England. They knew those facts from statistics. Should they endeavour to imitate Germany and institute for India a gold coinage, it would make things a great deal worse. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Midlothian did not seem to be very clear as to the object of the Motion. What was the object of the Motion? It was an endeavour to bring about that which it in terms contemplated—the re-assembling of the Conference. There was something more which they had a right to expect, and that was that the British Delegates should not go with their minds filled with ideas contrary to the spirit of the Conference, and should not put, as it were, a veto upon the discussions before the Conference had been very long in operation. The facts proved that this was the case at the late Conference, and complaints were made in this spirit by various gentlemen who addressed that Conference. He did not suggest that this appeared in what was technically called the Report. That report was made by the Delegates, upon whose part there was not that open mind which should exist on the part of representatives of Britain. But any hon. Gentleman could read the proceedings for himself. He would see that he (Mr. Howell) was quite right in his conclusion. This was abundantly

*Mr. Howell*

clear from the speeches of the Delegates at the Conference. It was also clear that British Delegates did not go to the Conference with that open mind that there should have been on the part of the representatives of the British Empire. He said that advisedly, after having read the Reports as carefully as any Member in the House. At any rate, the United Kingdom having such vast interests, not only at home but abroad—having such vast trade with various parts of the world that were purely silver-raising countries—the British Delegates should have been the first at the Conference to endeavour, if possible, to find a way out of this great monetary difficulty. Mr. de Rothschild, one of the four—or, as he preferred to say, one of the six—representatives of Great Britain at the Conference, had indeed made some important suggestions, and if they had been acted upon with frankness, and if other British Delegates had not made observations which tended to limit the discussion, some way might have been found out of this difficulty—a difficulty which, however it might be sneered at, there was not a statesman in Europe or America that had attended that Conference did not recognise, and seeing that great monetary and industrial difficulty staring them in the face, did not almost beseech the Delegates of Great Britain to take steps to bring about a solution of that difficulty. Under these circumstances, they had a right to call on the British Government to afford facilities, such as those suggested in the resolution for the re-assembly of the Conference, and that the Delegates of the United Kingdom should enter into the discussions with, at any rate, an open mind, that they might be able, if possible, to discover a way out of these great financial and industrial difficulties, not only for the United Kingdom and India, but for all the other nations of the earth. It was not only with India that our trade had fallen off; our trade with South America and other silver-using countries had also declined, owing to these monetary difficulties. If they went to Sheffield, to Lancashire, to the Midlands, and even to Yorkshire, which sent their goods to silver-using countries, and asked what was the state of trade with South America, they would learn that what he had said was true. There were difficulties in the way of

trade in South America. Some might think that the difficulties in these countries were purely political, but though they might appear political to us, they were financial to the States concerned, and they had brought about the commercial difficulties and the falling off of trade to which he had referred. He did not think that the Government had a right to complain that the Resolution was a harmless Resolution, and that it did not provide a solution of the difficulty. That was for the Conference and not for Parliament. As a loyal supporter of the Government, as one who had supported the Liberal Party in its dullest as well as in its bright and sunny days, he was astonished that a Whip had been sent out to the Party to oppose the Resolution. He thought that was a matter that might well have been left to the House, for it was a matter that did not affect the Government. The late Government assented to the Conference, the present Government went into it on precisely the same instructions. And what should have been done was that not only should the Government have honestly carried out these instructions, but an effort should have been made by the British Delegates at the Conference to bring about such a reconciliation of interests at the Conference as might have led to the solution of this monetary difficulty. He was sorry that the Government, instead of doing this, had thrown difficulties in the way of the re-assembly of the Conference; but he should certainly support the Resolution.

\***MR. NAOROJI** (Finsbury, Central) said he did not wish to go into the question of the merits of monometallism and bimetallism. He wished merely to refer to the chief argument of bimetallists, which was that France had stood by bimetallism for 70 years, and had thereby introduced a fixed ratio between gold and silver. The question now was whether the bimetallism of France had been the cause of keeping the ratio between gold and silver steady, or whether it was not the fact that the ratio of gold and silver was not steady even when the system of bimetallism existed in France. He would ask if bimetallism had steadied that ratio why had it been broken up,

and why had France given it up? When bimetallism existed in France there had been no universal consent between France and the other nations of the world, and why was that universal consent required now if bimetallism had any virtue in it? His contention was that when the time came that the ratio between gold and silver had become steadier they might have bimetallism or not, for it would come to the same thing. But India was the subject on which he wished to address the House principally. It had been said over and over again in the course of the Debate by one side that India had been largely benefited by the fall in exchange, and by the other side that India had been injured by the fall in exchange. It was difficult to arrive at a conclusion as to which side to believe, for each side had said it had official authority for its assertion. Instead of making general statements of that kind he would lay before the House a simple ordinary trade transaction from which they would be able to judge how far the difference in the two currencies in England and India, and the rise and fall in exchange, affected India. But in considering the subject they should always remember that India was in an unfortunate economic condition. They should consider India in two aspects—both as a self-governing country, like China independent of outside political influences, and as a country under foreign domination, with many important forces influencing her for evil and for good. Let them first take India as situated like China or any other self-governing country that had a silver currency. As far as trade and commerce between two independent countries were concerned it made no difference what currency existed in those countries. He would illustrate that by a simple trade transaction. A trader in India had to sell a hundred bales of cotton which cost him R.10,000. He sent the cotton to an agent in England to sell with directions to forward him the net proceeds of the sale. When the exchange stood at par rate of 2s. a rupee the trader had in calculating his profits to take that into consideration, as well as freight and insurance, and he would know exactly that he had to get a certain price, say 6d., for his cotton, in order to get his original

R.10,000 back and a profit of say another R.1,000. But suppose the rupee stood at 1s. instead of 2s. in exchange. In that case the trader would get only 3d. per pound instead of 6d. per pound for his cotton to cover his R.11,000. As exchange fell prices fell with it proportionately in England, and all the talk about India getting immense quantities of silver when there was a fall in exchange was simply absurd. The Manchester manufacturer was not such a fool as to pay 6d. per pound for cotton in England when by sending a telegram to Bombay he would be able to get the same cotton for 3d. per pound. His contention was, that whether there were two separate currencies in the two separate countries or not it had no weight or effect on the one country or the other, commercially, and in any case the Indian trader in the business transaction he had mentioned got back the money he had invested and in ordinary circumstances a profit of 10 per cent. In these controversies there was always a reference to prices. It was said that on such and such an occasion prices were high, and that on such another occasion prices were low. That was a very fallacious test, because the ultimate prices of commodities were not the result of one particular force, but the result of many forces, such as supply and demand, exchange, cost of production, &c. He was exceedingly thankful to those hon. Members who had shown so much sympathy towards India, but somehow or other the argument was always on the side for which it served its purpose. India was at one time exceedingly poor, and at another time exceedingly prosperous. But whatever the state of India might be, the system of exchange had nothing to do with it. Then take India, as it was, under foreign domination. It was true that India, under her peculiar circumstances, felt the pinch. India had to remit £16,000,000 sterling to this country every year. This year, or perhaps next year, it would unfortunately be £19,000,000, because for several years the India Office had got capital paid by Railway Companies in England, and did not require to draw their bills in India to that extent. The whole evil arising from the fall in exchange was this: that the disease already existed in India,

*Mr. Naoroji*

and that fall in exchange came in and complicated it. If the disease of excessive European Services did not exist it would not be the slightest consequence whether the exchange was 6d. or 1s., or 2s. or 4s. the rupee. The position was, therefore, this: India had to send from her "scanty subsistence" a quantity of produce to this country equal to the value of £19,000,000 in gold. As gold had risen, India had to send more produce in proportion to the rise in gold, no matter what the currency was—silver, or copper, or anything. The sympathies of those who wished well to India in the course of the Debate were therefore a little misdirected. The remedy for the evils from which India was suffering did not lie in introducing bimetallism, or changing the currency into gold or restricting the silver currency, but in reducing the expenses of the excessive European Services to reasonable limits. After a hundred years of British administration—an administration that had been highly paid and praised—an administration consisting of the same class of men as occupied the two Front Benches, India had not progressed, and while England had progressed in wealth by leaps and bounds—from about £10 in the beginning of the century to £40 per head—India produced now only the wretched amount of £2 per head per annum. He appealed to the House, therefore, to carefully consider the case of India. He knew that Britain did not want India to suffer—he was sure that if the House knew how to remedy the evil they would do justice to India, but he wished to point out that bimetallism and the other artificial devices that had been put forward were simply useless, and that India would get no relief from them whatever. On the contrary, much mischief would be the result. With regard to the meeting of the Conference again, he thought it would be useless. In 1866, when Overend, Gurney, and Company failed, when many of the East India banks broke or were shaken to their foundations, and Bombay was in ruins, entirely on account of the fall in the price of cotton, no man in his senses tried to save this or that merchant, and raise the price of cotton somehow or other. The storm

raged and ran its course. Many a well-known name passed into oblivion, but in a year or two no one thought anything more about it; cotton came in as usual from the interior, new men came into the field, and all the ruin was forgotten. The mischief was done in the present instance by the United States. There was a commercial disturbance, coming from demonetisation in Germany, or the excessive production of silver in America; just as storms arise in the physical world. The United States undertook the absurd feat of trying to stop it, and keep up the price of silver, and the result was that the more it was stemmed the greater force it acquired. Twenty years of suffering had been due entirely to this one mistake. The Indian people would be the greatest sufferers, but the storm must take its course. They could no more stop it than they could order gravitation to become non-existent, or make water run upward. Silver would go on falling until it had reached its proper bottom; the Indian and Chinese currencies would remain; there would be silver-using and gold-using countries, and the amount of silver that would come into operation would be useful in one way or another. On the one hand they were told that it was law that had made all this confusion, and the very same gentlemen who told them so would rush to the same law again to produce an artificial and worse condition of affairs. They must allow laws, commercial, physical, moral, or political, to be governed by nature. If they tried to stop the storm, the result would be far more disastrous. Conferences might meet, but they would not reach any conclusion except some artificial device which would merely cause more mischief. It was said that France was anxious for bimetalism and laid the blame of her not adopting it on England. But when France and the other Latin nations had bimetalism silver took its own course, and there was no use laying the blame on England now. He was of opinion that England must stick to the sound scientific principle of currency that she had adopted. Nor should she allow the currency of India to be tampered with. He thanked the House for the favourable hearing accorded to him, and hoped that before any step was taken to change the

currency system either of this country or of India they would think once, twice, and three times.

\*MR. CHAPLIN (Lincolnshire, Sleaford): Everybody will agree, I think, that nothing has been lost by the concession of the whole of the day for this Debate, which has been made remarkable by the striking speeches of the Prime Minister and of my right hon. Friend (Mr. Goschen). That was, Sir, indeed, a conflict of giants on currency and finance, and I confess that it is only with fear and trembling that I venture to enter on the same arena. I desire to reply, in the first place, to one or two of the statements which fell from the Prime Minister. He said that fixity and invariability were qualities to be sought in a standard of value. But he seemed to think that the same amount of fixity could not be obtained by having a double as well as by a single standard. It has been pointed out by one of the most eminent monometallists of the day—Professor Jevons—in his able and interesting book on money, that that is an entirely erroneous idea, and that, in order to attain the greatest possible amount of stability, it is absolutely necessary to have a double instead of a single standard. He gave a very admirable illustration of this, by citing the case of two reservoirs of water, into which the water was conveyed by two separate pipes, and pointed out that as long as they were separated, the fluctuations would be infinitely greater than if they were connected by a central pipe extending over the whole of the area. That is an illustration which it is not very easy to answer, and in which it will be difficult to find a flaw. The right hon. Gentleman spoke of the disadvantage of a country like this, the greatest creditor country in the world, accepting a bimetallic system. He said that the debts owed to us amounted probably to £2,000,000,000, and I admit that is a very large amount, but it must be remembered that part of these debts are investments in silver securities, and that we should gain rather than lose by that change. More of them still are invested in countries that use a silver standard, and it must not be for-

gotten that if you press these countries too hard, and reduce them to poverty and bankruptcy, you will probably be met with a repudiation of the debts, and be the losers in the long run. Again, it may be pointed out that a still larger share of all these debts are invested in industrial undertakings abroad, and would be repaid by the rise in the prices of commodities anticipated from a change of this description. But are there no such things as debts at home? It is estimated that the debts owed in England alone amount to no less than £4,000,000,000. My hon. Friend the Member for Whitby questioned the fact of the appreciation of gold being an evil at all, but what is the meaning of the appreciation of gold? I venture to remind him that the meaning is that as gold appreciates, and precisely in the same proportion in which it does appreciate, so much more of the labour and the product of the country is required in order to obtain the gold necessary to meet these obligations. The only way of getting gold that I know of is by exchanging for it something that there is to sell, and I am aware of nothing, with the exception of land which is unreclaimed and therefore valueless, which is not the product of the labour of the country. That is why, in a society like our own, it is beyond all doubt a most serious evil when there is an appreciation of the standard of value, and especially to the workers and producers of the country. The Prime Minister said silver had fallen 40 per cent., and he was horrified because it was asked that it should be restored to the artificial value given it by the law. But, why not? Has gold no artificial value given it by the law at the present moment? What does the House suppose would be the value of gold to-morrow if you passed a law to demonetise it, as silver was demonetised 20 years ago? Gold, you must remember, is the rich man's money; silver is the money of the poor man. The Prime Minister is rather foud, very often, in this House and elsewhere, of posing as the friend of the poor man. But when it comes to a question between silver and gold he is ready enough to protect the money of the rich man and let the money of the poor man take care of itself, so far as he is concerned.

*Mr. Chaplin*

The Prime Minister also said wages had risen enormously. Since when, I should like to know? I absolutely deny that wages have risen since 1874. The Chancellor of the Exchequer said the same thing the other night, and told us the story of some old man in the New Forest who declared that 50 years ago he was getting only 7s. a week, whereas he was now getting 12s. or 14s. a week. Yes, but if the right hon. Gentleman will take the trouble to refer to the wages paid some 15 or 20 years ago, before the demonetisation of silver occurred, he will find that wages, so far from having risen, had fallen very considerably indeed. I do not know if it is worth while to refer to another extraordinary argument used by the Prime Minister when he said that the salaries of first-rate actresses and first-rate members of the medical profession had increased. What does that show? It simply shows that first-rate actresses and first-rate doctors, like first-rate Prime Ministers, if I may say so, are rather rare. But it has no bearing whatever upon the question of the appreciation of gold. The hon. Gentleman the Member for Whitby said two things, to which I turn for a moment to reply. He said one of the conditions of England's greatness was the fact that she possessed a gold currency. I believe there is no greater fallacy in the world. We owe our supremacy to the character and the reputation of our merchants and men of business, and to the credit of the country as a whole. Since when is it, I should like to know, that we have attained this commercial supremacy? It is not a thing of yesterday or the day before. If my hon. Friend will take the trouble to refer to *Alison's History*, he will find it stated that—

"England has the whole of the trade and commerce of the world in her own hands to-day;"

and that, if you please, was in reference to a period some years before 1816, while England was still a bimetallic country. Mr. Disraeli, who was usually reckoned a tolerably good authority upon most things, also said the same thing in a very celebrated speech he made at Glasgow some 14 or 15 years ago. He declared that the idea that we owed our

commercial supremacy to the fact of our having a gold currency was the greatest delusion in the whole world. "Our gold currency is the consequence," he said, "not the cause of our supremacy." Sir, my hon. Friend also said that to adopt the system of bimetalism would be a fraud upon the public creditor. Now, who is the public creditor? I suppose it is the holder of Consols. But is my hon. Friend not aware that the whole of the National Debt was contracted at a time when silver was legal tender money in this country, and now the taxpayer has to repay it in appreciated gold? That is to say, that at least 30 or 35 per cent. more of the labour and produce of the country is required in order to pay the burden of our National Debt than would have been required if bimetalism still prevailed, and gold had not appreciated to that extent. The hon. Member who has just sat down said that during the time the bimetallic régime prevailed in France the ratio varied as much as 25 per cent. The hon. Member is absolutely and entirely mistaken. No variation approaching that ever occurred, and it was only after the Mints of France were closed to the free coinage of silver in the midst of the Latin Union that any substantial variation occurred at all. My hon. Friend the Member for Hampstead said he opposed this Motion because he desired to close at once and for ever a question which, in his opinion, led only to a most mischievous agitation. I am not surprised when I hear such desires expressed by gentlemen who are fortunate enough to be engaged in the very lucrative business to which he belongs. It is a curious and instructive fact that whereas almost everyone engaged in productive industry in this country, who has carefully studied this question, supports it, it is invariably opposed by the bankers, and I am not at all surprised at it, because they are the great owners of gold. Of course, the more gold appreciates and the more valuable it becomes, the more it is to the interests of those who own it. But I am afraid the hon. Member will never succeed in closing this question, however much he may desire it. The force of circumstances and the evils of the present situation will be far too strong for him. Now I come to the Motion on the Paper, of which we have not heard

as much as I should have expected during this discussion. Now, Sir, that Motion was called the other night, by no less an authority than the Prime Minister, a Bimetallic Motion. I think that was a most inaccurate description. As far as I am concerned, I wish most emphatically to state that there is not a syllable in that Motion which would pledge any human being to the adoption of the bimetallic theory. I acknowledge that I am myself a convinced bimetalist, and upon a proper occasion I should be perfectly prepared to give what I believe to be conclusive reasons in support of the views I entertain, and I am also of opinion that it would be the best, the simplest, and the most effective remedy for all the evils of which we complain at the present time. I go so far as to say that so great, in my opinion, are those evils, that if I could not obtain bimetalism without it, which is what I would like to do, I would even consent to the adoption of bimetalism in this country. But I also know that practical men have to consider what is attainable as well as what may seem to them to be desirable, and although it may be taken for certain that the large majority of the nations abroad would come to an agreement for this purpose to-morrow, if England would agree to it, yet I see so little chance of her doing so at present that I am not going to urge that course to-night. What I am going to urge as a matter of the very first importance is that the Conference should re-assemble at an early date, with a view to coming to some understanding, upon bimetalism certainly, if they will, but, if they will not, then upon some one or other of the alternative projects which have been submitted to the Conference, or which may possibly be proposed in the future; and, above all, that our English Delegates should be instructed, at all events upon this occasion, to join heartily and cordially in the endeavour to bring about such an understanding. I do not wish it to be supposed that I have any desire myself to change the currency in this country, if it can be avoided. Part of this Empire uses a gold standard; part of it uses a silver standard; and what I should like to see

is this—namely, that that part of the Empire which uses a silver standard should be permitted to make an arrangement with the other nations and come to an agreement upon bimetallism with them. But, at the same time, so important are the evils, in my opinion, that I should be prepared to agree to a change even in this country, if there were no other means or possibility of obtaining it. These evils are very grave; they are notorious; they are not denied; and there is not a doubt that every day it is becoming a more and more imperative necessity that something should be done to meet them. What is the nature of the evil from which we suffer? It is stated in the Motion; it has been stated over and over again in the course of this Debate. It is the great divergence in the relative value of the metals at the present time; a divergency the tendency of which is always to increase. Silver, which up to 1874 was worth 62d. an ounce, has now sunk to 37d. or 38d. There is the more familiar illustration of the rupee that used to be worth 1s. 11½d. What is it worth to-day? Something, I believe, over 1s. 2d. Now, Sir, that immense divergence has occurred entirely within the last 20 years; and if the House will only take the trouble to remember and to examine into the history of the precious metals, it will be found that it is in reality one of the most remarkable occurrences in the world. It is a change of immeasurably greater magnitude than any other which has occurred in the value of the metals—I had almost said since the creation of the world—but undoubtedly since the time when the system of barter was abandoned by civilised mankind, and gold and silver first became the joint money of the world. I believe that statement, startling as it may seem, can be positively established on the highest authority. Under those circumstances, it is not uninteresting, I think, to endeavour to arrive at the truth of the causes which have produced that very extraordinary result. Are we to account for it by any sudden increase in the production of either of the metals? Nothing of the kind, because it is a positive fact that the variations in the productions of these metals have been infinitely greater in former years than have been any of the variations since the years 1873 or

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1874, and yet no change occurred all that time in the relative value of the two metals. Is it to be found in the anticipation of a greatly increased production of silver in the future? If Members would take the trouble to study the Report which we have received of the proceedings of the Conference they would find, on the contrary, that it is stated and generally believed that the production of silver has already reached its maximum, and that entirely irrespective of the circumstances under which it may be produced. No, Sir, the explanation of this extraordinary revolution must be sought on wholly different grounds, and it is not very difficult to find them. Up till the year of which I have been speaking, the Mints on the Continent and of the United States of America were open to the free coinage of silver—that is to say, they were bound by law to take all the silver and all the gold that was brought to them and to coin it into legal tender money. Unfortunately, in these years, for reasons into which I need not enter now, those Mints were closed to the free coinage of silver, and for the first time in the history of the metals gold and silver were absolutely divorced. Gold alone since then has been coined into legal tender money, and, consequently, gold ever since that time has had to do the work which formerly was done partly by gold and partly by silver, and as the necessary result, in relation to the work it has to do, it has become comparatively scarce, and, therefore, dearer than it was before. Gold, in other words, has appreciated, and this is shown by the heavy and general fall in the prices of commodities. The Prime Minister asked my right hon. Friend how he proved this, and he answered, with perfect truth, that it was a matter on which it was very difficult to give absolute proof. But the right hon. Gentleman must know that by the system of Index Numbers, with which he must be familiar, it has been tried and tested by a great number of the most eminent statisticians in the world, who have, one and all, come to the conclusion that we are in the presence of the phenomena known to economists as the appreciation of money, and it is appreciated to the extent I have described. I am aware that the Prime Minister, the

hon. Member for Whitby, and others have disputed this altogether, and they say the fall in prices is owing to other causes — to increased production, to the inventions of science, to the improved facilities of transport, and various other matters of that kind. But, if that is so, the fall in prices must have been universal. It must have occurred in silver-using countries as well as in gold. The evidence on this point, however, is conclusive that in countries where silver is legal tender there has been no change in prices at all. That seems to show that it is gold which in reality has risen, not the other things which have fallen, and that, I believe, is the real and simple reason of the great and growing divergence in the metals. And, indeed, it could not well be otherwise, unless gold differs altogether from every other commodity in the world; for if you suddenly increase or double the demand on any given commodity, without any corresponding increase in the supply, it must of necessity become comparatively scarcer, and, therefore, dearer than it was before. But be that as it may — and whether I am right or whether I am wrong as to the causes which I have endeavoured to describe — there remains the fact of this great divergence; and it is that fact and its consequences with which we have to deal. Now, what have those consequences been? I should like to read a short extract from an admirable paper written by one of the ablest professors of modern days. He says —

“All property and Stocks are depreciated, hence the numerous failures of Building Societies and ruinous foreclosures of mortgages. The burden of fixed charges is increased, and the producer finds the margin of profit disappear. Thus employment becomes restricted and wages fall; the weight of taxation increases automatically; the burden of all debts, including the National Debt, in which every taxpayer is concerned, is steadily aggravated.”

That is the statement of Professor Foxwell, and it is deserving of our attention. Sir, I might also point out, if I were inclined, the wide depression which we see at present almost everywhere around us, and which bimetallists believe is largely due to the continuous fall in prices resulting from the appreciation of gold. And certainly it is remarkable

that that depression should have continued so long, not only in this, but in every other gold-using country in the world, and in almost every industry that can be named, and it does seem as if there must be some general and common reason for the whole. Go where you will to-day in England, you will not find a tradesman who will not tell you the times never were so bad. There is not an operative anywhere in the North of England who will not tell you he has seldom known them worse. You can hardly find an agriculturist who will not declare that he is on the verge of ruin, and you have thousands of poor people in all parts of England out of employment. Looking further abroad, I might point to the agrarian upheaval rising so steadily and rapidly in Germany, and to the social revolutions which are hardly restrained in other countries on the Continent at the present time. And of all these I think I might say with justice that they constitute part of the evils of which we are complaining and for which we desire to find a remedy. But I will not dwell upon these points to-night, because I think it possible they may be disputed, and also because I am perfectly well content to base my case and my claims for support on those evils which were described by Lord Herschell, the present Lord Chancellor, in the Report of the Gold and Silver Commission which he signed, as “the proved evils” of the present situation, and which, God knows, are enough in themselves! What are those proved evils? There is the question of our trade with other silver-using countries, and there is the question of Indian Finance. Everybody knows how enormous is the injury which is done to our trade at present with silver-using countries. Legitimate and successful trade with the East has become hardly possible at all; it is practically converted into nothing but a gamble on the Exchange. As to the state of Indian finance, that is a question the gravity of which it is hardly possible to over-estimate. I understand the deficit in the Indian Budget is estimated already at £1,500,000, and by any further fall in silver that deficit may be indefinitely increased at any moment. Now, Sir, as long as we continue to govern India at all, I hold it is our duty to



govern India for its good. You are confronted, as I say, with an enormous deficit already, and every further fall of 1d. in the value of silver means an additional £1,000,000 to the deficit in your Budget. How are you going to meet it? You may reduce expenditure or you may increase taxation. Is either of these courses open to you at the present time? You may lessen your Expenditure in either of two ways: You may reduce your Army or you may stop the outlay on public works. To do the first will be to abandon the national defences and to lay the country open to the attacks of the enemy. To do the second will be to vitally interfere with the prosperity of India in the future. Neither of these alternatives, therefore, I think I am right in saying, can be accepted or even considered for a moment. Well then, can you increase the taxation of the country if these other sources are not open to you? I am informed by very competent authorities that India is already taxed as heavily as she ought to be, and probably as heavily as she can be, and that any considerable increase of taxation in that country would probably lead to the most serious discontent, and very likely to even more serious disturbances. I express no positive opinion on that point, because there are many Members in this House better entitled to speak on the Indian situation than I am. But I believe it to be true. There is indeed a fourth alternative, which I venture to think would be as dangerous as it would be foolish if it were adopted. You may seek to establish a gold standard in that country and to fix artificially the value of the rupee. Are you really going to tamper with the currency of that part of Her Majesty's dominions? It is a favourite expression of the Chancellor of the Exchequer. We heard a good deal the other night in another Debate about tampering with the currency in England. I hope the right hon. Gentleman will tell us in the course of this Debate whether it is true or not that the Government are going to tamper with the currency in India in this case. You appointed a Committee upon this subject; and it certainly has been sitting for an unwontedly long time, and there is no Report yet. What is the meaning of

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this great delay—this very unusual delay? Does the right hon. Gentleman know? If he does not, I think I can tell him. They cannot make up their minds about any Report. A little bird whispered to me the other day that no two Members of that Committee were of the same mind. I am not surprised. He would be a bold man indeed who would make the recommendation, and until I know it to be true I will not believe that Lord Herschell, whom I have always regarded as a man essentially prudent and cautious, will dare to advise so rash and so dangerous a course. If you do, in my humble judgment, you will embark upon an illimitable and unknown field of danger, and the last state of India will be worse than the first. Now if I am right in the view I am venturing to submit to the House, what is the position of the Government if, by voting against this Motion, you declare that you will have no further meeting of the Conference in Brussels or anywhere else? What can you expect if this Conference is finally broken up without coming to any result? Your own Delegate, Mr. Alfred de Rothschild, one of the strongest monometallists of my acquaintance, says—

“I need hardly remind you that the stock of silver in the world is estimated at some thousands of millions, and if this Conference were to break up without any definite result there would be a depreciation in that commodity which it would be frightful to contemplate, and out of which a monetary panic would ensue, the far-spreading effects of which it would be impossible to foretell.”

Now, Mr. de Rothschild may be right or wrong. I myself should be disposed to think that he is most likely to be right, but you cannot shut your eyes to this: that if nothing at all is done it is practically certain that America will very shortly cease her purchases of silver. If she does, it is almost certain silver will go down again with a run, and all your difficulties in India will be *pro tanto* aggravated and increased, and you may find yourselves landed at any moment in a deficit to a frightful and untold amount. What are you going to do under these circumstances? That is a question which all Parties in this House will admit to be of the gravest possible importance. That is a question which the Government

must have considered, and it is one to which I am certain, if it can be given with propriety, the House would desire to have an answer. For my own part, looking at this question from the point of view of India alone, it does seem to me, for our own interest and even for our safety in that country, to be a matter of the highest importance that the Conference should meet again and should endeavour to come to some solution of the question. I hope with all my heart—I would fain believe—that the Government will re-consider their intention, if they have formed the intention, of refusing the Motion which is submitted to the House. Now, Sir, that being my opinion, perhaps the House will allow me for a few minutes more to inquire how it was that the Conference was so barren of results before. It was said that it was owing to the attitude of England and to the conduct of some of the English Delegates. I endorse most thoroughly that opinion; and I go further, and say I shall be prepared to prove that the conduct of some of these Delegates was deserving of the greatest blame, and that they grossly violated the instructions they had received. I am not speaking of the Delegate whose apparent object was to break up the Conference and bring it to nothing from the first, and who on one special occasion, when the whole of the 48 Delegates were present (I am speaking of Mr. Bertram Currie) found himself in a minority of one—a position, I venture to say, neither very dignified nor very creditable to the representative of a great country like our own on an occasion of great national importance. However, as no member of the Conference apparently attached the slightest importance to his opinions, I think we may dismiss Mr. Currie from our minds. I am speaking of the official Delegates, and of Sir Rivers Wilson in particular, of whom I am afraid I shall have a good deal to say. What are the facts? It has been already stated that the proposal for the Conference was made by the United States, and it was cordially assented to by the late Government. In due course three delegates were appointed to represent England. One was an official representative of the Government; another was a monometallist, a representative of what may be called the moneyed interests of the country; and the third

was a distinguished bimetallist—the hon. Member for Manchester, who represented the industrial interests of the country. No one can question the fairness and the perfect equity of these appointments. But then came a change of Government, and the matter passed into the jurisdiction of the right hon. Gentleman opposite. What did he do? In order, I suppose, to make quite safe of his own views, he immediately added two strong monometallists to the three Delegates already named, the first of them being an official and the second being another representative of the moneyed interest; and here I wish most emphatically to protest against the preponderance which has been given to the representatives of the moneyed interest on that Conference. I quite admit that that interest is of extreme importance, but the industries of this country are even more so. So, again, I acknowledge that an effective and good banking system in this country is of great importance; yes, but the welfare and the happiness of the people do not depend upon the perfection of a banking system, but, on the contrary, they depend on the prosperity of its industries, and the labour and the wages which they provide. Now, the Conference met on the 22nd of November; and here I would venture also to appeal to the right hon. Gentleman that in case of the Conference ever meeting again some alteration should be made in the respect I have mentioned and that the industries of this country should be properly represented in future. Now, in the absence of any definite proposals from the United States, a scheme was presented by Mr. Alfred de Rothschild on the 25th. On the 28th that scheme was referred to a committee. On the 2nd December the Report of the Committee came before the Conference. I need not say that Mr. Bertram Currie on that occasion took the opportunity of making a speech which was no doubt intended to prevent everything and anything being done, but Sir Rivers Wilson on that occasion supported the Motion for Adjournment. The Conference met again on December 6. It appears to me that something extraordinary must have happened during that interval; because, when Sir Rivers Wilson came back to the Conference on the 6th December to consider this motion of Mr. Alfred de Rothschild, he did everything in

his power to oppose it and bring it to nothing. And not only did he oppose Mr. Alfred de Rothschild's proposal, but he opposed another scheme before the Conference which was known as the scheme of Mr. Moritz Levy. His conduct appears to me to have been so remarkable that I was tempted carefully to examine the instructions which were given to the Delegates, and I am going to ask the House to consider what these instructions were. In the first place, they read as follows :—

"The invitation to the Conference contemplates the study of any measure for the extended use of silver which may be proposed."

So that this instruction was as wide as possible ; it excluded nothing. Then they go on—

"Under it a Delegate may suggest a scheme for a double standard, but it admits also the discussion of any scheme for promoting the use of silver as currency,"

So that this instruction again in no way excludes the discussion of bimetallism. On the contrary, it distinctly contemplates its discussion, and, in my opinion, very properly. Thirdly, the instructions say—

"Her Majesty's Government do not limit the powers of the British Delegates in the first instance by any prohibition to enter on such field of inquiry as the members of the Conference may desire to cover. It is of the essence of the question that the ideas of the Delegates should be reduced to working plans, and should thus be subjected to practical criticism. For that purpose it is neither necessary nor desirable to exclude any particular idea from discussion, provided always that it is put forward in practical form."

Then comes the last part of the instructions—

"Above all things the Delegates should study with the greatest care every measure suggested to ensure a wider use of silver in currency, before they come to the conclusion that matters must be left as they are."

To sum up these instructions, then, they were as wide as possible ; any measure which might be proposed was to be discussed ; the discussion of bimetallism was distinctly contemplated, no limit was placed on the Delegates, and nothing was excluded. They were, moreover, distinctly told

"to study with the greatest care any measure which might be suggested before they came to the conclusion that matters should remain as they were."

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How did Sir Rivers Wilson perform his duties under those instructions ? On December 6, the day on which the Conference met to consider Mr. A. de Rothschild's proposal, he entered on the debate at once by reciting his instructions. He knew perfectly well what they were, and he said—

"The instructions we have received from our Government require us, before concluding that matters must be left as they are, to examine with the greatest care any plan which may be submitted."

So far so good. But how did he begin his speech on Mr. de Rothschild's Motion ? And it should be remembered that at this time bimetallism was not even before the Conference. He said—

"In order to avoid all misunderstanding I desire, on behalf of Sir Charles Fremantle and myself, to make in the face of this assembly our profession of faith. Our faith is that of the school of monometallism pure and simple. We do not admit that any other system than the single gold standard would be applicable in our country."

Yet his instruction was to consider every proposal that might be made. Then he goes on to the plans of Mr. de Rothschild and Mr. Moritz Levy—

"The only plans which have as yet been studied by the Conference are those of Mr. Moritz Levy and Mr. de Rothschild, and we are willing to admit that the adoption whether of one or both of these plans would perhaps not be incompatible with the principles which we hold."

Well, it is something to find that there were any proposals which were not incompatible with Sir R. Wilson's principles. But it did not serve them much, for he checked them both at once, and went on to say—

"Has either of those plans the least chance of meeting with such a preponderance of support as would justify the representatives of Great Britain in recommending Her Majesty's Government to take them into consideration ? So far as concerns Mr. de Rothschild's plan, it can hardly be said that it has received such a measure of support. This fact, apart from other considerations, is sufficient to decide us to abstain from taking part in a discussion of detail which we know beforehand would be absolutely fruitless."

How was it likely that this plan could have support when the English Delegate met it in this way at the outset ? He may answer that it had been considered in the Committee and rejected by a majority of 7 to 6. The Committee was not the place to decide this question. It was the Conference which had the right

of coming to a decision upon it ; but in order to prevent its being entertained the official English Delegate said he would not have anything to do with the proposal. I will tell you directly what was thought of its summary rejection by other members of the Conference. But, first of all, let me tell you what he said as to the other proposal, Mr. Moritz Levy's—

"There remains the proposal of Mr. Moritz Levy, which would involve the withdrawal of the half-sovereign. It would be equally useless for us to discuss this measure, since Great Britain would undoubtedly be unwilling to submit to the inconvenience of such a withdrawal unless it were presented in conjunction with a plan offering advantages which a preponderant majority of the Powers would recognise."

In what part of his instructions had he authority to make that statement? It is all the more remarkable because I think the calling in of the half-sovereign was part of the scheme which was suggested not long ago by the late Chancellor of the Exchequer in a speech delivered in the country; and certainly no decision either of Parliament or of the Government or of the country was ever taken upon it. I have said enough as to the manner in which these instructions were carried out. What was thought of this treatment by the Delegates from other countries who were present at the Conference? They were intensely annoyed at the hostility which was shown to any of the proposals by the English Delegates. I need not repeat the quotation which has been read as to the view of M. Tirard, the French Delegate, who avowed that France was a bimetallic country, and that it was prevented from accepting bimetallism owing to the attitude of England.

SIR W. HARCOURT : No, no.

MR. CHAPLIN : The right hon. Gentleman says "No." Then I will read to the right hon. Gentleman the declaration which was made by M. Tirard—

"M. Tirard declared that France was bimetallic in fact, and that if she would not resume the free coinage of silver, and if she would not go back to absolute bimetallism, it was only because England and other countries of Europe had declared in the most formal way that they intended to remain monometallic."

Does the Chancellor of the Exchequer pretend for a moment to believe that there would be the slightest difference of

opinion on the part of any country, unless it might possibly be Germany, with regard to accepting bimetallism if England proposed or agreed to that course herself? The right hon. Gentleman knows that there would not be a moment's hesitation. Sir William Molesworth, the Indian Delegate, was outspoken in his censure. He said—

"For these reasons I regret the hasty and premature action of Sir Rivers Wilson in his declaration of uncompromising hostility to the double standard as in a measure prejudging the whole case before an opportunity could be allowed for its fair discussion. The *quasi*-official declaration of the hon. Delegate's views (absolutely opposed, it is to be noted, to those of his colleague, Sir William Molesworth) not only precludes any advance by other Powers towards a solution of the difficulty, but places Great Britain in the invidious position of being the principal if not the sole obstacle to a satisfactory solution of the difficulties under which we labour."

Then the Netherlands Delegate, M. Boissevain, said—

"Mr. de Rothschild's proposal has been withdrawn, and before he withdrew it we heard Sir Rivers Wilson declare in his own name and in that of Sir Charles Fremantle that, considering the proposal had not been received in a sufficiently favourable manner by the great majority of Powers represented in the Conference, the British delegation would be unable to recommend it to their Government. I think I am not mistaken in saying that this declaration and the withdrawal of Mr. de Rothschild's proposal were a great disappointment to many of us."

M. Zeppa, the Italian Delegate, said—

"Mr. de Rothschild's scheme seemed to me to be the practical starting-point for the carrying out of these principles, although some essential modifications in it might have been necessary. Unfortunately, the declarations made at the last sitting by Sir Rivers Wilson leave us at present no hope that Great Britain will give her support to the Rothschild proposal."

And so I could go on and quote a number of the Delegates, all expressing their regret at the attitude of the English Delegate and their anxiety to have come to some understanding. I think that I have said enough to justify the statement that if the Conference failed so far it is due to the attitude of England and to the official Delegates who represented her. I am bound to add that, if Sir Rivers Wilson had received from the Chancellor of the Exchequer instructions to do his utmost to break up the Conference and bring its deliberations to nothing, I do not think he could have taken an attitude

more calculated to serve that purpose. I put a question to the Chancellor of the Exchequer the other night, and I asked him if the instructions contained in the Blue Book were all the instructions that were given to the English Delegates, and the right hon. Gentleman answered, "Yes, Sir; that is the case." I accepted, of course, to the full the statement he made, and I cannot refrain from saying that that being the case, in my deliberate judgment the attitude of the English official Delegates is deserving of the severest censure. I have endeavoured to put before the House, not dogmatically, I hope, some reasons which seem to me to lead to the conclusion that it is a matter of vital and supreme importance to the interests of this country that the Conference should meet again. I hope the Government will even yet meet the question in the same spirit. I would almost fain believe that they would be willing to accept the Motion, for great indeed will be the responsibility which rests upon them if they refuse it. Great and just will be the condemnation which will be theirs hereafter if by doing so they precipitate a situation which may bring with it confusion and destruction not only to the interests of India, but to the interests of the Empire over which they rule.

\*THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EX-CHEQUER (Sir W. HARCOURT, Derby): It was a saying of Voltaire that the English shot an Admiral to encourage the others. The object of the right hon. Gentleman who has just sat down is that the Delegates should return to the Conference, and you have heard the language in which he has spoken of the Delegates who are to return. I must say that a more extraordinary proceeding I have never heard of. The right hon. Gentleman and the late Chancellor of the Exchequer have stated that the British Delegates were the people who broke up the Conference. I will undertake to say that the exact opposite is the truth; that the English Delegates were the only people who prevented the Conference from separating as soon as it met.

MR. CHAPLIN: The official Delegates.

SIR W. HARCOURT: Official Delegates? I do not distinguish between the

one and the other. In all International Conferences hitherto the Delegates have gone expressly to represent the opinions of the Government. The United States and Europe did not want to know the opinions of individuals; they wanted to know the opinions of the responsible Government. In my opinion, it is a totally novel and unfortunate experiment to try and balance the Delegates and to send one man to represent one set of opinions and another to represent another set of opinions. No delegation would have any influence whatever unless it spoke in the name of the Government it represented. What took place? The United States invited this Conference. It was natural that the United States should make a proposal for the Conference to consider. The French Delegates expressed some surprise at the fact that the United States did not submit a proposal to the Conference, and it seems to me that the one thing that bimetallicists do not desire to do is to bring their favourite theory to the test of a proposal on which they are prepared to take issue. The representatives of the United States said they would not, in the first instance, bring forward a bimetallic motion, but they did make a motion. The motion brought forward at the very commencement of the Conference was this—and I ask the attention of the House to it. The United States representative concluded the speech in which he introduced the programme by moving a general resolution—

"That, in the opinion of this Conference, it is desirable that some measures should be found for increasing the use of silver in the currency system of nations."

That is the very thing which the right hon. Gentleman who has just sat down and the late Chancellor of the Exchequer say they desire. It appears, from the Report of the English Delegates, that this resolution was merely a recapitulation of the terms that had been accepted by Her Majesty's Government, and accordingly Sir Rivers Wilson, on behalf of the British Delegates, at once declared that they accepted the resolution in that sense, at the same time reserving to themselves full liberty of action as to any particular proposal. They were the first persons to support the resolution relating to scheme 5 for the better use of silver, and what became of that resolution? The Delegates of almost all the

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Powers of Europe declined to support it, and the United States were obliged to drop it. How did the matter go on? Who had a scheme to propose to the Conference for discussion? The British Delegate, Mr. A. de Rothschild. He proposed a plan which was referred to a committee. What became of it? It was defeated in the committee by the vote of the Latin Union, and it was made known that the United States of America were opposed to it. Such was the action of the British Delegates, who, according to the right hon. Gentleman opposite, broke up the Conference. They supported the first practical motion that was brought forward, the motion before the committee for buying up more silver, and the two States that one would have thought would have principally supported the proposal—the United States and France, who are the great buyers of silver—denounced it, and voted it down. The majority of the committee even passed a resolution declaring that if the plan were adopted by the Conference the majority would be unable to recommend it to their Governments. Was that the doing of the British Delegates? It was not. It was the declaration of the representatives of the other Powers concerned. I can only believe that the right hon. Member for the Sleaford Division and the late Chancellor of the Exchequer have never read the Report. If they had they could not have so mis-stated the case. What, then, was the situation? Sir Rivers Wilson found that the proposal of the British Delegates had been defeated in the committee by the very Powers who were expected to support it, and he was informed that the United States were about to vote against it in the Conference. Naturally he did not wish to expose that proposal to a formal defeat in the Conference, and with the consent and approval of Mr. de Rothschild he said that in the circumstances he did not feel himself entitled to press it forward. It would have been absurd, in that situation, to go on with it. In spite of what the right hon. Member for Sleaford has said, bimetallicism from first to last was at the bottom of the whole thing, just as it is to-night. From the very first the Delegates recognised that it would be impossible to exclude the question from

the discussion at every point, and it was resolved that the speakers would be allowed to treat the whole subject from a general point of view. Thus the whole question of bimetallicism was open at that time as at every other time. Then it became necessary for Sir Rivers Wilson to express his own opinion. How was it possible for him to address the Conference and not state whether he was for or against bimetallicism? In my opinion, when the Government of Great Britain sends a delegation to meet the Powers of Europe at the invitation of the United States, it is the duty of that Government to let Europe and America know what views they entertain. There is no doubt, after the speech of the Prime Minister to-night, what are the views of the present Government. I do not know what Europe and America will think of the views of the late Chancellor of the Exchequer. I am not sure that they will know whether he is a bimetallicist or a monometallicist. He told us that he wanted this Conference to meet. He condemned the Conference in the severest terms two years ago. This is what the late Chancellor of the Exchequer said on the 18th of April, 1890, when the restoration of bimetallicism was quite as desirable as it is now—

“We are asked to convoke another Conference to see whether some International agreement cannot be arrived at. Conferences have been held, and very exhaustive Reports made, and no result has been possible. We appointed a Royal Commission, and what was the result? A divided Report; and it is certainly not upon a divided Report that we have a right to take the very responsible step of tampering with the general currency.”

I was not the author of the phrase “tampering with the currency as applied to bimetallicism.” These were his views when the right hon. Gentleman was Chancellor of the Exchequer. And then he went on to say—

“The argument is used that we might by general agreement adopt a bimetallic system. I have no time now to state what I think the dangers of such a course. But though you might have a Conference which would come to some agreement, I have very great doubts whether that agreement would be permanent.”

These were the right hon. Gentleman's opinions two years ago. What are his views now? Can anyone tell? Is that the position which, in the face of Europe and of America, the first commercial nation in

the world, ought to take? No; let us be bimetallists or monometallists, but let us not take up this vacillating and shilly-shally position. Let the world know that those who have been Finance Ministers have courage and character enough to say what they think. What the opinions of Her Majesty's Government are upon this subject there is no secret about, and there never will be; but what would be the views of any Government which might take its place on a matter of such profound interest to the people of this country is quite uncertain. There was one voice in the Debate to which I have referred which unfortunately now is silent. There was no man more fit and capable of judging in these matters, and of speaking with authority upon them than the late Leader in this House of the Conservative Party—Mr. W. H. Smith. Nobody who heard it will have forgotten the speech, characterised by great practical knowledge and great practical common-sense, which was delivered by Mr. William Smith on that occasion in this House and from this place. The late Chancellor of the Exchequer made an attack upon what was said by the Prime Minister with regard to the statement of Mr. Herries, a former Chancellor of the Exchequer, as to the danger of creditors calling in their money. The right hon. Gentleman ought to have remembered that that quotation from Mr. Herries was referred to by Mr. Smith upon that occasion, and this is what he said—

"To pass such a resolution Mr. Herries said would be the greatest of disasters to a mercantile country. It would result in this, that those entitled to demand money advanced by them would instantly require that it should be paid in the coin and currency in which the debt had been contracted. Mr. Herries pointed out that the inevitable result of such a change in the basis of mercantile transactions would be to produce a panic which would be disastrous."

The right hon. Gentleman opposite said that Mr. Herries spoke in a totally different condition of our mercantile affairs and our banking system. Does the right hon. Gentleman mean to say that Mr. Smith was not acquainted with the present position of our mercantile affairs and our banking system? Mr. Smith says—

"I have not been able to find any evidence, either in the arguments addressed to this

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House or in the Report of the Commission or elsewhere, which is absolutely conclusive to show that the fall in the value of silver is necessarily connected with the fall of prices in any part of the world."

Well, the late Chancellor of the Exchequer and the right hon. Gentleman who has just sat down appealed to the opinion of Lord Herschell, and denied that he, on the Royal Commission, had stated that there had been no substantial appreciation of gold. This is what the Report, signed by the noble Lord, contained—

"We do not think there is any conclusive evidence of a substantial appreciation of gold to be derived either from a review of the variations in prices or from the circumstances relating to the production of and the use of that metal."

When I am told that there is no doubt whatever about the appreciation of gold, and when I find a Report of this kind signed by, among others, Herschell, Fremantle, John Lubbock, and Leonard H. Courtney, I think I am entitled to say that the fact is not conclusively established.

MR. GOSCHEN: Will the right hon. Gentleman go on with the quotation?

SIR W. HARCOURT: There are many passages of the kind. The right hon. Gentleman does not deny that?

MR. GOSCHEN: I deny that any passage is signed by a majority of the Commission which does not acknowledge the appreciation of gold.

SIR W. HARCOURT: I have very little time at my disposal, and I do not wish to waste words upon that point. Everyone interested in the subject knows that on the Commission there were an equal number on both sides, and that this Second Report contains the passage quoted by the late Mr. Smith in this House. Let me go back again to the Conference and the charge—I repeat, the unfounded charge—which is made against the British Delegates. I am bound to say this, in consequence of the language of the right hon. Gentleman, that I was officially informed by the Delegate of the United States, when he came to England after the Conference, that they had received more support from the British Delegates than from the Dele-

gates of any other States in Europe. I say that upon my responsibility, after official communication with the Delegate of the United States. Now, I should like to tell the House why the Conference failed and why it broke up, and I will tell it in the authoritative language of the Italian Delegate, who was the gentleman who moved the adjournment of the Conference. We are told that it was the British Delegates who broke up the Conference.

\*MR. CHAPLIN: I did not say it was the British Delegates who broke it up. I drew a distinction between the official Delegates and the others—and I named Sir R. Wilson, and I read out his instructions.

SIR W. HARCOURT: The plan of the Conference was one which was never adopted before. When the late Chancellor of the Exchequer went to Paris in 1878 he went there as a Delegate of great experience and of great authority in the name of the British Government, and how did he then treat this question? I will read to the House a sentence from the right hon. Gentleman's own Report. The right hon. Gentleman said—

"We ourselves considered that the impossibilities of establishing any bimetallic system by common agreement for all the world were so obvious that it was scarcely worth while to argue the matter."

I hold the opinion now that the right hon. Gentleman then held. He added—

"We declined as also unnecessary any discussion on the general merits of the single or double standard."

It would have been interesting to have heard what the right hon. Gentleman would have said if anyone had got up in this House and had spoken of his conduct, as the right hon. Gentleman opposite has spoken of Sir R. Wilson. And now I come to what I may call the official reason why the Conference failed. The Italian Delegate came forward and moved the adjournment of the Conference, and, in the course of his speech, he said—

"Well, gentlemen, why have we arrived at no result thus far? Because, frankly, no proposal was ripe."

And the English translation hardly give an idea of the fine satire of the French phraseology.

"They were improvised, so to speak, for the needs of our discussion. What could we do without preparation, without precise instructions from our Governments?"

He meant that he regarded no proposal of any value which was not a formal proposal made by some responsible Government. He said—

"In these conditions an adjournment is desirable. Let us, in the first instance, give the Governments time to gain a knowledge of our discussions and of the speeches of the eminent Delegates from all countries of the world. In six months it is possible that, in returning here, we shall find ourselves face to face with more mature and more practical proposals. We have planted the fertile germ; give it time to develop and to grow. We know already that in a new meeting there will be no question of discussing principles."

"Our Latin ancestors said in such circumstances, '*Roma locuta est.*' Now that all has been said we know with what we have to count. Each wishes to stay in his entrenchments, and we must not hope that the monometallists will yield any more than the bimetallicists. But we know their respective tendencies, and that is a great deal. We can see clearly ahead."

That was the view taken by persons who moved the adjournment of the Conference, that it was idle to come back again to discuss amateur proposals, and that if it was to do any good in the future it must have before it for discussion proposals made by some responsible Government. Well, Sir, if the Conference should be called together again by the United States, and if this condition is fulfilled, Her Majesty's Government will be perfectly ready to discuss these questions, as they have been ready to discuss them before. They will not consider only their own opinion in the matter. They will discuss, in a courteous and friendly manner, any proposals that are laid before them on the responsibility of some of the Powers. As regards the former meeting, there was no proposal laid before them, except at the end. The bimetallic proposal was discussed and withdrawn at the former meeting by the United States. It will be seen at once that if it had been put to the vote it would not have had support from any of the Powers of Europe. The condition of European opinion on this subject is described in the Reports of the Delegates. This is the opinion of Europe—



"Certain countries declared themselves frankly as adherents of the monometallic faith. The Representatives of Germany, Denmark, Sweden, and Norway were clear in their declarations that no change would be made in the gold basis of the currency of those countries. Switzerland, though a member of the Latin Union, declared explicitly that she was an unshaken adherent of the monometallic principle, and the Delegate of Austria-Hungary was equally explicit in his statement that his Government had every intention of abiding by the gold standard which they are in course of adopting. On the bimetallic side the lead was taken by the United States. The Netherlands were prepared to join a bimetallic union, provided that Great Britain formed a part of it; and Spain and Mexico were ready to adopt a bimetalism or other measures which would have the effect of raising the price of silver. No declaration of policy was made on behalf of Russia, though one of her Delegates, speaking personally, was an active supporter of the gold standard. The Roumanian Government did not consider bimetalism a practical possibility, and Turkey and Portugal expressed no opinion."

Then the Delegates say—

"It appeared to us that the discussions had shown such divergence of interests that there was little more prospect of an agreement after an interval of a few months. We did not, however, think it politic to oppose a wish generally entertained by the Conference, and therefore contented ourselves with expressing doubts as to the advantages to be gained from further meetings, and urged that under no circumstances should the Conference be called together again except for the consideration of a definite proposal emanating from the Government of the United States, or some other Government."

Now, I venture to say that that is a very sensible and rational explanation on the part of the Delegates. They said, as the Italian Delegate had said, that it was a mere waste of time to meet without having definite proposals before them, authorised by a responsible Government. If the Government of the United States will inform the Government of this country, and the Governments of the other countries of Europe, that they are prepared on their responsibility to propose a scheme, then, of course, the Government of this country will be ready in the fairest and frankest way to discuss it, but what are we asked to do in this Motion? Are we to go and propose a scheme? If so, what scheme? We are told to-night that it is not to be bimetalism. When the adjournment of the Conference was moved it was agreed that it was not to be bimetalism, and the Italian Delegate said it was to be some

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scheme that did not propose a fundamental change—that if they met again it must be to discuss no scheme which would affect fundamentally the monetary system of any country. Then, what is the scheme? Has the late Chancellor of the Exchequer got a scheme? If he were now responsible, what are the instructions he gave to the Delegates? What ought to be put before the Conference? How can you ask a Government to go round the world and say, "Come to a Conference," and when they arrive there have no proposals to lay before them? If the right hon. Gentleman thinks there are any proposals which ought to be laid before the Conference, why has not he, or the right hon. Gentleman who followed him, attempted to enlighten the House and the country as to what they are? The right hon. Gentleman has questioned the attitude of Germany. The attitude of Germany rests not upon the language of the Delegates, but upon the emphatic statement of Count Caprivi, that nothing would induce Germany to depart from her monetary system. Why will not Germany depart from that system? Why—because she has seen the splendid success England has obtained under that system. Does the right hon. Gentleman suppose that Germany, having undertaken to establish a gold standard at very great expense, is now going to abandon it? What has happened? Austria-Hungary has followed her example, and all the other countries of the world are becoming monometallists, finding that in practice the system is the most sound and the most successful. Then the right hon. Gentleman opposite endeavoured at the close of his speech to alarm us on account of the terrible misfortunes that have overtaken this country since 1873. Does not the right hon. Gentleman know that in the last 20 years there has been a greater growth of the produce of the Income Tax than at any former period, and that the Probate and Death Duties, which indicate the accumulated wealth of the country, have increased to an enormous extent? Are these the effects of a false monetary system? When I hear Protectionists and bimetalists preaching these woes and sorrows and this ruin, I ask them to look at the evidences of the growth and

progress of the country. Everybody deplors the present depression. I hope it is only a temporary depression, but depressions of this kind have occurred under the bimetallic system quite as much as under the monometallic system. We are told that the cotton industry is depressed, but the number of spindles and power-looms in the last 15 years has enormously increased in Lancashire. How, then, can you say that the industry is ruined? Sir, what is the avowed object of this Motion? It is to raise prices—to raise prices by an artificial system. In my opinion, a rise in prices is not an object desirable in itself. I believe, on the contrary, that cheapness is an advantage, especially to those classes of the community who have not much money to spend. The right hon. Gentleman, whom we are all glad to see again in his place to-night (Mr. A. J. Balfour), said at Manchester that, for his part, he preferred a depreciated currency, because it would raise prices. Therein lies the whole secret of bimetalism. That is the true history of bimetalism, but those are not objects which we desire. If there is a wish to summon a Conference, and to lay before it practical proposals, Her Majesty's Government will be perfectly ready, not only from motives of courtesy, but from motives of every kind, that the English Delegates shall go there. They have done everything they could to encourage its deliberations, and they will give fair, careful and courteous consideration to any proposals that are laid before the Conference. They are willing and anxious to act in that spirit. If the United States summons the Conference again the English Delegates will be perfectly prepared to go to Brussels. No doubt, if their Report is not in accordance with the views of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for the Sleaford Division (Mr. Chaplin) they will be subjected again to his invective if they do not take their instructions from him. They will, however, sit and give fair and careful consideration to any proposal submitted to them as they have done before. That is the desire of the Government, and all the Government think they are able to do. They have no proposals of their own to make; and none have been made to them from the

opposite side. Under these circumstances, I think I have given the right hon. Gentleman all the assurances he ought to expect, or that we are able to give.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR (Manchester, E.): Nobody will complain of the length of the speech just delivered by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, but by the inevitable lapse of time it has not left me a sufficient interval in which to discuss this question. I make no complaint that the right hon. Gentleman should have exhausted the subject, but he has left me time to contradict a statement as to my views which fell from him at the end of his speech. He quoted from an address I made at Manchester on this subject, and he interpreted my words as if I had stated that in my view the best possible currency was a currency where a portion decreased in value, with prices therefore steadily rising. I said, if not precisely the reverse of that, something entirely inconsistent with that. I said the currency reform to which I would put my hand would be the establishment of a stable standard of value, but if in the fallibility of human endeavour, if in the difficulties in carrying out our intentions, we had to choose between the standard which appreciated and the standard which depreciated, then I thought the whole experience of the world showed that of these two evils—of these two great evils if you will—a depreciating standard was the less. Having corrected that misrepresentation of the right hon. Gentleman, I will only say that his speech, though it did not contribute, and was not intended to contribute, very largely to the speculative basis of any opinions we ought to form upon this question, at all events made the attitude of the Government perfectly clear. Our position, therefore, is this. We live in a time when, according to the opinions of the Commission—and this is a Government that believes in Commissions—in the opinion of the Commission, at the head of which sat their own Lord Chancellor, on whose opinion on currency matters they have so much confidence that they have also made him Chairman of the Commission now sitting upon the Indian aspect of the question—in the opinion of that Com-

mission falling prices were due to appreciation in currency, and the appreciation of currency carried with it grave evils. That was the opinion of the Commission. It is certain that among these evils is the condition of things in India, which is so perplexing to yourselves that you have to appoint a Commission to look after it—a Commission which has not yet reported, and which, so far as I can discover, is not likely to report. You have a condition of things in which at any moment the confusion already introduced into our finances by the alteration of the standard of money may be largely augmented by the legislative action of the United States, over which we have no control, and over which we have no title to interfere. It is also certain, in the opinion of the Commission, that these evils might be mitigated by some International agreement which would add greater stability to the standard of value. Under these circumstances, with all these evils threatening us, the Government have determined to do nothing. Now, Sir, those who vote for this Motion do not vote for bimetalism. They neither vote for bimetalism nor for any other specific scheme for dealing with the matter. They do recognise the great evils that arise from the present condition of our currency; they do regard the change in the value of that currency, or rather the change of the standard of value, as carrying with it very serious consequences to all productive trades, and they therefore think that this Conference should be encouraged by the Government, in the hope of finding some remedy by which these great evils could be remedied. Under these circumstances, I have no doubt whatever in which direction I should give the vote I am about to record.

Question put.

The House divided :—Ayes 148 ;  
Noes 229.—(Division List, No. 15.)

Words added.

Main Question, as amended, put, and agreed to.

Resolved, That, seeing that the deliberations of the International Monetary Conference mainly turned on the question of bimetalism; that after protracted sittings no agreement could be

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arrived at by the representatives of the assembled Powers; and that any interference with the single monetary standard now by Law established in this Country is open to the gravest objections, this House thinks it inexpedient that the Government should take any steps to procure the re-assembly of that Conference.

#### HOUSE OF COMMONS (ADMISSION OF STRANGERS).

Select Committee appointed "to inquire into the Rules and Regulations under which Strangers are admitted to this House and its precincts, and to report whether any alterations in the same are expedient."—(*Mr. Secretary Asquith.*)

The Committee was accordingly nominated of,—Mr. Secretary Asquith, Mr. Bartley, Mr. Austen Chamberlain, Mr. Conybeare, Mr. T. M. Healy, Mr. Hozier, Mr. Shaw Lefevre, Mr. Roby, Mr. David Plunket, Mr. James Stuart, and Mr. Stuart-Wortley.

Ordered, That the Committee have power to send for persons, papers, and records.

Ordered, That Five be the quorum.

MR. T. M. HEALY (Louth, N.) asked whether "strangers" included ladies and members of the Press?

MR. ASQUITH: I would rather not be called upon to answer the question. I know there are authorities in the House who think the word should be so construed.

MR. CONYBEARE (Cornwall, Camborne) said, he hoped the Committee would have power to deal with the question of ladies. As he had more than once raised the question, and as his name had been added to the Committee, he supposed that that question was to be considered.

\*MR. SPEAKER: We have passed the appointment of the Select Committee, and, therefore, the question of the appointment of the Committee cannot be raised now.

MR. T. P. O'CONNOR (Liverpool, Scotland): Would it be possible, Sir, to move a proviso extending the meaning of the word "strangers" so as to include ladies and reporters?

MR. SPEAKER: That would be in the nature of an Instruction to the Committee. If the hon. Member will put such an Instruction on the Paper it can be considered.

**CASUALTIES OF SUPERIORITY (SCOTLAND) BILL.**

On Motion of Mr. Stephen Williamson, Bill to amend the Law relating to Casualties of Superiority in Scotland, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Stephen Williamson, Mr. Thomas Shaw, Mr. Shireess Will, Mr. Dunn, and Mr. Dalziel.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 234.]

**PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS (EXPENSES) BILL.**

On Motion of Dr. Clark, Bill to place the official expenses at Parliamentary Elections on the local rates, ordered to be brought in by Dr. Clark, Mr. Cremer, Mr. Caine, Mr. T. Healy, Dr. Cameron, Mr. Picton, Mr. Mather, and Mr. T. W. Russell.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 235.]

**CROFTERS' HOLDINGS (SCOTLAND) ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.**

On Motion of Dr. Cameron, Bill to extend to the county of Bute the provisions of "The Crofters' Holdings (Scotland) Act, 1886," and any Acts amending the same, ordered to be brought in by Dr. Cameron, Dr. Clark, Mr. Lyell, Mr. Weir, Mr. Macfarlane, Mr. Beith, and Mr. Angus Sutherland.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 236.]

**LAW OF DISTRESS (IRELAND) BILL.**

On Motion of Mr. T. M. Healy, Bill to amend "The Law of Distress and Small Debts (Ireland) Act, 1888," ordered to be brought in by Mr. T. M. Healy, Mr. Barton, Mr. Sexton, Mr. Field, and Mr. Matthew Kenny.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 237.]

**JUDICIAL RENTS (IRELAND) TEMPORARY ADJUSTMENT BILL.**

On Motion of Mr. Matthew Kenny, Bill to provide for the Temporary Adjustment of Judicial Rents in Ireland, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Matthew Kenny, Mr. Arthur O'Connor, Mr. Knox, Mr. Jordan, Mr. Pinkerton, and Mr. Chance.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 238.]

**BARGE OWNERS, &C., LIABILITY (NO. 2) BILL.**

On Motion of Sir Reginald Hanson, Bill to limit the Liability of Owners and Hirers of Lighters and Barges, ordered to be brought in by Sir Reginald Hanson, Mr. Cobb, Sir Thomas Sutherland, Mr. Beaufoy, Mr. Evans, Mr. Kimber, Mr. Edward H. Bayley, and Mr. Husband.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 239.]

**JURORS' REMUNERATION BILL.—(No.182.) COMMITTEE.**

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Clause 1.

Committee report Progress; to sit again To-morrow.

**SELECTION (STANDING COMMITTEES), TRADE, &c.**

SIR JOHN R. MOWBRAY (Oxford University) reported from the Committee of Selection; That they had nominated the following Members to serve on the Standing Committee for the consideration of all Bills relating to Trade (including Agriculture and Fishing), Shipping and Manufacture which may, by Order of the House, be committed to such Standing Committee:—Mr. Addison, Mr. Arch, Mr. Asher, Mr. Barran, Mr. J. Barry (Wexford), Sir Michael Hicks Beach, Mr. Edward Blake, Mr. Bonsor, Mr. Boord, Mr. A. H. Brown, Mr. Burt, Mr. Caine, Mr. Joseph Chamberlain, Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr. Channing, Mr. Jesse Collings, Mr. Colman, Sir Charles Dalrymple, Baron Henry de Worms, Sir Frederick Dixon-Hartland, Mr. Everett, Mr. Charles Fenwick, Mr. Hayes Fisher, Mr. Penrose Fitzgerald, Mr. Gilliat, Sir Julian Goldsmid, Mr. Goschen, Mr. Gourley, Sir Reginald Hanson, Mr. Timothy Harrington, Sir John Hibbert, Sir William Houldsworth, Mr. Howell, Mr. Jackson, Mr. Joicey, Mr. Long, Sir John Lubbock, Mr. Macartney, Mr. M'Lagan, Mr. Morrogh, Mr. Mowbray, Mr. Mundella, Mr. Murray, Mr. Naoroji, Sir Stafford Northcote, Mr. T. P. O'Connor, Mr. Oldroyd, Sir Richard Paget, Sir Joseph Pease, Mr. Power, Mr. Randell, Mr. Rankin, Mr. Rathbone, Mr. Roche, Mr. Round, Colonel Saunderson, Mr. Sexton, Mr. Samuel Smith, Mr. Solicitor General, Sir Mark Stewart, Mr. T. D. Sullivan, Mr. Tomlinson, Sir George Trevelyan, Sir Richard Webster, Mr. Webster, Sir James Whitehead, Mr. Stephen Williamson, and Mr. C. H. Wilson.

LAW, &c.

SIR JOHN R. MOWBRAY further reported from the Committee of Selection; That they had nominated the following

Members to serve on the Standing Committee for the consideration of all Bills relating to Law, and Courts of Justice, and Legal Procedure which may, by Order of the House, be committed to such Standing Committee :—The Lord Advocate, Mr. Ambrose, Mr. Asquith, Mr. Atherley Jones, Mr. Attorney General, Mr. Bartley, Mr. Beach, Mr. Bolitho, Mr. Jacob Bright, Mr. Brodick, Mr. Bryce, Mr. John Burns, Mr. Carson, Sir Edward Clarke, Mr. Courtney, Mr. Donald Crawford, Mr. Cremer, Mr. Curzon, Mr. Darling, Mr. Deasy, Sir Charles Dilke, Mr. Dillon, Sir William Hart Dyke, Mr. Tatton Egerton, Mr. John E. Ellis, Sir Thomas Esmonde, Mr. S. T. Evans, Sir Walter Foster, Mr. Henry H. Fowler, Mr. Gathorne-Hardy, Mr. Herbert Gardner, Mr. Herbert Gladstone, Mr. Haldane, Sir Charles Hall, Sir Edward Harland, Mr. T. M. Healy, Mr. Staveley Hill, Mr. Samuel Hoare, Mr. Hobhouse, Sir Ughtred Kay-Shuttleworth, Mr. Kenyon, Mr. Knox, Mr. W. F. Lawrence, Mr. Shaw Lefevre, Mr. Lockwood, Mr. Mac Neill, Mr. Matthews, Mr. John Morley, Mr. Edward Morton, Mr. Mount, Mr. Mulholland, Mr. Muntz, Mr. William O'Brien, Sir Charles Pearson, Mr. Pickard, Mr. Picton, Mr. John E. Redmond, Mr. Stuart Rendel, Mr. Bryn Roberts, Sir Albert Rollit, Sir George Russell, Mr. Parker Smith, Mr. Francis Stevenson, Mr. Storey, Mr. Taylor, Sir Richard Temple, Mr. Whitmore, and Mr. Stuart Wortley.

Reports to lie upon the Table.

#### CONTEMPT OF COURT (PERSONS DETAINED.)

Address for "Return of all Persons detained in Prisons in England and Wales under committal by Judges for Contempt of Court, or who are otherwise in Prison without trial and are not awaiting trial; the name, address, and occupation of each Prisoner; by whom committed, and the cause of committal; date of committal and of imprisonment; Medical Report on physical and mental condition of each Prisoner; whether committed for a specific term or indefinitely, and if for a specific term when it will expire (in continuation of Return ordered 14th May, 1888);"

"And, in similar form, the names, &c. of all Persons detained in Prison for penalties or debts due to the Crown in Exchequer, Excise, or Customs suits."—(*Mr. Hopwood.*)

#### CEMETERY COMPANIES, &c.

Address for "Returns from all Cemetery Companies and Burial Boards, having offices within the administrative county of London, and the City of London, of the half-yearly payments made during each of the five years ending the 30th day of September, 1892, to each of the several incumbents for the time being of each of the various parishes or ecclesiastical districts from which bodies have been removed for interment in the consecrated portions of their Cemeteries by virtue of 'The Cemeteries Clauses Act, 1847,' s. 52, or other statutes, whether Public or Private Acts; such Return to distinguish fees upon Pauper interments charged upon the Poor Rates by 7 and 8 Vic., c. 10, s. 31, or any subsequent statutes :"

"And, of the fees paid during the same period by the same bodies to parish clerks, sextons, or other ecclesiastical officials in respect of such interments as aforesaid, distinguishing in each case those of Paupers."—(*Mr. Picton.*)

#### MESSAGE FROM THE LORDS.

##### STATUTE LAW REVISION.

That they have come to the following Resolution, namely :—

"That it is desirable that all Statute Law Revision Bills of the present Session be referred to a Joint Committee of both Houses of Parliament,"

to which they desire the concurrence of this House.

#### ADJOURNMENT.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That this House do now adjourn."

\*MR. HOZIER (Lanarkshire, S.) asked whether the Suspensory Bill for Scotland would be taken on Thursday or Friday?

THE PATRONAGE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (MR. MARJORIBANKS, Berwickshire) said, he believed the Business both on Thursday and Friday would be the consideration of the Supplementary Estimates.

Motion agreed to.

House adjourned at half past Twelve o'clock.

## HOUSE OF COMMONS,

*Wednesday, 1st March 1893.***PRIVATE BUSINESS.****POLICE AND SANITARY REGULATIONS.**

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. HERBERT GLADSTONE, Leeds, W.), in moving the first of the Motions that stood in his name, said : I would point out to the House the Instruction is in a somewhat new form to that in which it was moved last year. There are undoubtedly arguments in favour of inserting provisions under the general law, and there are undoubtedly arguments especially in reference to Consolidation Bills by which localities seek to codify their local law. The object of the Instruction is to guard against the danger that arises under the present practice with regard to Private Bill legislation, which might lead to confusion between the general law and private law. The Instruction, as it stands, is designed to further limit the power of the Sanitary and Police Committee. There is a proviso in the Instruction which excepts from its operation certain Bills, perhaps the most important of which is the Bill brought forward by the Corporation of Leeds. I wish to explain to the House why that exception is made, lest it be thought that I have some sinister motive in putting it in in the interest of my constituents. This Bill, which is a Consolidation Bill, was brought forward last year under the Instruction as ordered by the House ; but owing to the General Election, it and one or two others were suspended under the Standing Order, and come forward in the natural course of things this Session. They are not, therefore, in the nature of new Bills introduced this Session. The Instruction, as it stands, would undoubtedly press very severely upon the promoters of these suspended Bills, and we hold that promoters of Bills brought forward under the Standing Order of last year, and suspended under that Standing Order,

are entitled to say that they should have the same chance this Session. We, therefore, propose by the exception inserted in the Instruction to give them the benefit of the Standing Order, of last year, so that they stand in the present Session precisely under the same advantages as they stood last year. I think the House will agree that this is only fair, and I beg, therefore, to move the Motion that stands in my name.

**Motion made, and Question proposed,**

"That the Committee of Selection do appoint a Committee, not exceeding Nine Members, to whom shall be committed all Private Bills promoted by Municipal and other Local Authorities, by which it is proposed to create Powers relating to Police and Sanitary Regulations which deviate from, or are in extension of, or are repugnant to, the General Law."—(Mr. Herbert Gladstone.)

\*THE PRESIDENT OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. H. H. FOWLER, Wolverhampton, E.) : I will trouble the House for a minute or two with reference to the appointment of this Committee, in which I have taken a great interest for the last 10 years, and with reference to which I feel it my duty to make a short statement to the House. I must say that I had considerable doubts as to the wisdom of appointing this Committee this year. Indeed, if it had not been for the fact that Bills had been hung up by the dissolution of Parliament, I should certainly have taken an opportunity of discussing the question very carefully with the Home Secretary and the Under Secretary before the Motion was brought forward. I think a state of things is now arising to which it is my duty to call the attention of the House. I am dealing solely with sanitary legislation; the Home Office deals with police legislation, and it would not be becoming in me to make any remark in that regard. The House will remember that this Committee was originally appointed some 10 years ago, and attention was called to the danger that would arise in consequence of Local Authorities by these Bills proposing to alter the general law of the land. This Committee has been at work now for a considerable number of years ; the original idea was when it was appointed that it should not encourage in any way legislation on matters which had been already dealt with by the general law of the land ; and that if it felt itself

compelled to grant special privileges, it should specially report to the House and state the reasons. We have long since passed away from that state of things, and Local Authorities are now prepared to entertain the opinion that they are at liberty to come to this House, and running the gauntlet only of this Committee, to propose serious alteration in the general law of the land. The House will remember how, I may say, the public peace—certainly the Business of the House—was placed with reference to the insertion in the Eastbourne Bill of clauses which never would have been inserted if they had been brought before the general notice of Parliament. Many of these sanitary questions can be dealt with through the Local Government Board by means of bye-laws, which would have to receive the approval of that Department, and which would afford a shorter, a more simple, and a more satisfactory method of settling them than that of Private Bill legislation. If you make a bye-law which the Local Authority wishes to alter, the Local Authority can alter it; but if you put it into an Act of Parliament, it requires all the machinery of an Act of Parliament to alter it. If there is to be any alteration made in the general law of the land, it is to be made by this House and by no one else, and after public discussions, with the light of the Press thrown upon it, and an opportunity given to gentlemen of all shades of opinion, and representing all interests, to give their views upon the question. But there is another machinery for legislation—to which I wish to call the attention of the House, and especially of this Committee which is going to be appointed—which I think is the true mode of supplying those needs which cannot be met by Bills, and that is the system of Provisional Orders. I think it is in the development of that system that the true remedy for dealing with Private Bill legislation is to be found. Under our system of Provisional Orders you have the greatest amount of care taken at the least cost. So far as sanitary matters are concerned, if an application is made to the Local Government Board, we send an Inspector down on the spot; he holds an inquiry, and everybody has the right to go before him. There is not the costly expense of the Private Bill legis-

lation of this House. The Inspector then comes back to the Department and makes his Report, which then goes through the different branches of the Local Government Board—the Legal, Finance, and Sanitary Departments—and the Provisional Order is drawn up by them in a manner that ensures that the legislation in reference to it is of a scientific, I might almost say artistic, character. The Provisional Order, so drawn up, is then brought before this House, and any Member who may desire to object to it in principle or in detail has an opportunity of doing so. I might say that this year the Department has had to deal with 90 Provisional Order Bills, and one-third of these are amending Acts which have run the gauntlet of Committee. I am told by those in my office who are best able to form an opinion, that probably not half a dozen—probably not more than two or three—of those Bills will be opposed. Now, let me call the attention of the House to the cost that is being incurred in Private Bill legislation by the different Local Bodies. A Return was laid upon the Table shortly before the Dissolution, and I find that in the last six years the Town Councils, Improvement Commissioners, and the Local Boards of England and Wales have spent £473,000 in the Parliamentary procedure of promoting Bills.

\*SIR F. S. POWELL (Wigan): Including the cost of Railway Bills?

MR. H. H. FOWLER: Excluding railways. In my opinion, five-sixths of that legislation could have been more successfully carried out by means of Provisional Orders at comparatively little expense. It is becoming something intolerable. I had a case brought before me this morning in which the rateable value of a district to be affected by a Local Improvement Bill promoted by the Local Authorities is only £7,400 a year, and the cost of the Private Bill they obtained was over £4,000. I think I should be wanting in my duty if I did not call the attention of the House to this question of cost, and I would like to call attention to the period which is allowed for the payment of these costs. To check local extravagance you should make the ratepayer feel its pressure. If you allow people to come to Parliament and extend the period over a number of years, that pressure is not felt. I am told that in no

case did the Committee allow a less period than 10 years for the payment of costs. I think 10 years is too long. The ratepayers of the day ought to bear the burden, and not throw it upon posterity. There is another point I should like to call attention to—namely, the labours of this Committee. Gentlemen have complained of the enormous burden this Committee is to those who serve upon it. But so it will be unless they put their foot down at once, and say they will not deal with special exceptional cases that require special exceptional legislation, and that they will not allow promoters to waste the time of the Committee by discussing general legislation with which this House has already dealt, or by discussing matters that could be better dealt with by by-laws or Provisional Orders. I recall for a moment that I had the honour of sitting on that Committee, under the Chairmanship of Lord Basing, who was then Mr. Sclater Booth, and I remember that in one morning we struck out 100 clauses at one fell swoop from a Bill which we did not think proper. There is another point, and that is the Standing Order which requires that this Committee is to report to the House the reasons why they deviate from, or grant powers in excess of, the general law. The intention of everybody was, I think, that the Committee should, as an ordinary Committee does, make a Special Report to the House and state why they have departed from the general law, but I am sorry to say a practice has sprung up to which attention should be drawn. The Committee schedules clause after clause, and they put in these words “allowed under the special circumstances.” But that is not stating to the House the reasons why they should be allowed. This is simply a matter of fact; and I am told that the Report is not drawn by the Committee or by the Clerk of the Committee, but by the agents of the promoters, which is not in accordance with the practice of the House. The only other point has reference to the Reports of the Government Departments. The House has required the Home Office, Treasury, Local Government Board, and Board of Trade to make Special Reports upon these Bills. These Bills are dealt with judicially, and I think that the Reports should not be relegated to the rank of ordinary petitioners. They

should be regarded as the Reports of Departments responsible to the Government and to Parliament, and not merely as those of the clerks of those Departments; and if the Committee overrule the Reports of the Departments, they should state their reason for so overruling them. I am sorry to have detained the House, but I think this private legislation is becoming fraught with danger. I think we are using machinery that was originally given to great public companies who had no other means of carrying out their enterprises, except by what I may call a Parliamentary contract; we are using that machinery to enable persons interested in a certain class of legislation, which, if they proposed in this House, they would not be able to carry, which the House would not sanction, but which we enable them to propose by means of a Private Bill Committee. We are opening the door to a great deal of mischief, to a great deal of conflict, and a great deal of confusion. The Infectious Disease (Notification) Act, and the other Acts mentioned in the Notice of Motion of my hon. Friend, were carried into law by the wise action of my predecessor, Mr. Ritchie; and the House having passed legislation, it seems to me that it is wisest and best to adhere to the old legislation, and not to allow that to be departed from or in any way dealt with except by a full House.

\*SIR F. S. POWELL : As I was the Chairman of the Committee last year I may be allowed to say a few words. So long ago as 1870 I was greatly struck by the condition of our Private Bill legislation with regard to towns, and then mentioned the subject in a discussion which led to the course adopted by the Departments, as subsequently both the Local Government Board and the Home Office made Reports which were submitted to the Police and Sanitary Committee. Then commenced the history which has been described by my right hon. Friend. I feel I am bound to express the obligation of the Committee to the highly satisfactory and complete Reports both of the Local Government Board and the Home Office; if the Committee had not had the guidance of those Reports, their labours would have been absolutely impossible. Guided by their suggestions, we have been able to deal with the Bills before us; and although



our conclusions may not have been in every case infallible, still in the main I believe they were sound. I entirely concur in what my right hon. Friend says as to the agents giving reasons. I believe it is right that the Report of the Committee should be such that those reading it would be able to understand what the reasons are and the validity of those reasons. Whether hon. Members would read those Reports is another matter.

**MR. H. H. FOWLER :** The Department would read them.

**SIR F. S. POWELL :** If the Department reads them I shall be satisfied. The practice adopted last year was this : The agents submitted to me, as Chairman of the Committee, their reasons, and I then modified or enlarged them as I thought most fitting. If I have the honour to be Chairman this year I shall take care that the reasons given by the agents are given at greater length. I concur with the spirit that animated my right hon. Friend in almost every sentence, and with every word he said with regard to the cases of Torquay and Eastbourne. I was not a Member of the Committee when these cases were decided, though I was when the Torquay case came before a Select Committee on which I served, but I entirely agree with the action the House took in regard to the Eastbourne case. I also entirely concur with what he said as to the bye-laws. We have said that we will not embody in any general Act what can be done by bye-laws, and the same remark applies to Provisional Orders. The Committee have frequently said, "We dismiss clauses dealing with matters which may be subject to bye-laws and Provisional Orders. I will not state the reasons for this action, as they have been given by my right hon. Friend ; but there is one point as to which I should desire to draw the attention of the House, and that has reference to the boundaries of boroughs. In Manchester, perhaps the largest city in England and Wales, the boundaries were enlarged so as to double the area, while the rating power has been increased by probably more than half, and that is the clearest proof that can possibly be given that the system of Provisional Orders is applicable to the most difficult cases. The Manchester case, which is of the highest interest, was

finally settled in the Committee-room upstairs ; and I believe the whole of that difficult case was solved in the course of one sitting, or a sitting and a half. I have myself felt that the Committee ought to be most careful how they deal with the extension of boundaries. I do not say the House ought to shut its doors altogether to the discussion of such extensions, but we ought to be most careful in the matter, and I should not object to some Instruction to the Committee not to deal with cases of borough extension except under special circumstances. I remember in one case, before Parliament authorised Local Authorities to proceed by Provisional Order, we had an extension scheme. I visited the place in the course of the autumn after the decision, and I found our boundary such that no one visiting the locality could have approved it after even a short and hasty inspection. I quite concur with the right hon. Gentleman as to the borrowing powers. I feel that the time should be limited, and sharply limited. In my own time a district in Wigan, which in my childhood was green fields and in my boyhood was a colliery district, is now green fields again ; but what would have been the condition of that district if able to borrow money over a lengthened period ? In regard to the question of the payments of the cost of the Bills by the promoters, if I am appointed Chairman, I will take care the suggestion is attended to, as my own opinion is that five years is amply sufficient. Then comes the question of the labours of the Committee. In the year 1890 I have passed four hours of each of the 51 sittings in that room, and often two hours in the Library beyond the time allotted to the Sitting. The result of that self-denial was that I was compelled practically to withdraw myself from the House during almost the whole of that Session. Such self-denial the House is not justified in putting upon any of its Members. I am grateful to the right hon. Gentleman for his speech. I concur entirely with the spirit shown by him from the beginning to the end, and there was scarcely one word that fell from him from which I would venture to dissent.

**\*SIR BERNHARD SAMUELSON** (Oxfordshire, Banbury) : My right hon. Friend below me has dealt very severely

*Sir F. S. Powell*

with the subjects to be referred to the Committee about to be appointed, and on that point I would like to say a few words. I understand he will decline to appoint it next year. [Mr. H. H. FOWLER dissented.] My right hon. Friend shakes his head, but I understood him to deal with the subject-matters referred to the Committee this year only.

MR. H. H. FOWLER: I simply reserve to myself the right to oppose the re-appointment of that Committee at a future stage.

SIR B. SAMUELSON: I hope the right hon. Gentleman will see cause to put the power he reserves into effect, because I cannot think that this Committee is otherwise than a Committee it is not desirable to re-appoint. The Committee, by its constitution and the amount of Bills referred to it, becomes so wearied that very few of the Members of that Committee are willing to go through its labours, and the consequence is that matters not of a purely public character spoken of by those who have preceded me, but other matters affecting private interests, such as the compulsory purchase of land, questions of rating, and various other questions of that sort, are settled by only a few of the Members or are heard only by a few of the Members. It is true the Members of the Committee have before them the proceedings of the Committee on which they have ultimately to come to a decision in print, but they are questions affecting important interests in regard to which they have to perform the functions of a Judge without having actually heard the evidence. I say, under those circumstances, it is difficult for them to arrive at a just judgment. And not only does this inconvenience arise, but another one also arises, and it is this: In consequence of it often happening that there is no quorum, witnesses, counsel, and others are frequently kept in London at a great expense to suitors, as I may call them, and thus an enormous expense is incurred that ought not to be incurred. Of course, that would be to some extent remedied if the number of Bills referred to the Committee in former years be diminished, and I think that some improvement might be made in the present year by the authorities whose duty it is to say what Bills shall or shall not be referred

to the Committee, taking care that only such Bills are referred as really contain provisions of the nature that this Committee was originally appointed to consider. If only Bills be referred to the Committee which deviate from, or are an extension of, or are repugnant to, the general law, then a very small number of Bills would be referred to the Committee; the labours of the Committee would be very much diminished; they would not be fatigued as they have been of late years, and a quorum would be more easily obtained, so that justice would be assured. By the Amendment I have placed on the Paper the object I wish to effect is this: that there shall be a careful selection of the Bills referred to the Committee; that only such Bills as really embody in them the provisions with which the Committee was originally intended to deal shall be so referred, and all others dealt with in the usual manner. By this means a considerable diminution of the labours of the Committee would result; they would be able properly to do their work, and it would not so frequently happen that a quorum could not be obtained, thus leading to the saving of considerable expense. I may mention that in the case of the Middlesbrough Corporation, I believe on two or three occasions no quorum could be obtained—the hon. Baronet will correct me if I am wrong—but on one occasion the Committee had to adjourn for three days because they could not get a quorum, and that in spite of the utmost exertions on the part of the excellent Chairman to obtain a quorum. What I wish is that those who are charged with the work of this Committee shall not be unnecessarily overburdened, and that only such Bills be referred to the Committee as contain provisions such as it was originally intended the Committee should deal with. I believe a great improvement would result, and I throw that out as a suggestion to my right hon. Friend. I am sorry the right hon. Gentleman the Member for the University of Oxford (Sir J. Mowbray) is not here; if he were I believe he would support this recommendation. I therefore beg to move the Amendment standing in my name.

Amendment proposed,

At the end of the Question, to add the words  
"Provided that only Bills proposing to create

such exceptional powers be referred to the said Committee."—(*Sir Bernhard Samuelson.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there added."

\*MR. HOPWOOD (Lancashire, S.E., Middleton): My first words should be those of apology, because I do not feel that I have any authority in this matter or that I can help its deliberations by any district suggestions; but as one who has taken some interest in this matter in years past, I hope the House will allow me to say a word or two upon it. I must say the vigorous speech of my right hon. Friend upon this matter has put the House in possession of everything that can be said upon it. I am sure it will lead to a very considerable improvement even in the deliberations of the Committee if the Committee should in future years be re-appointed. I have no doubt my hon. Friend the hon. Baronet (Sir F. S. Powell) opposite did render excellent service when he secured those first Reports of the Departments on Private Bills to be made a necessary assistance to Committees of the House; that, I have no doubt, made the subsequent history of this matter become of interest to the House. When, on a later occasion, I had the honour of calling the attention of the House to the extraordinary way in which private legislation had been conducted in this House—I mean in its permitting that a Committee should have power to suggest and that its suggestion should receive such weight as to be carried into law to alter the law of the land by miserable, vexatious, irritating legislation up and down the country, wherever there was a Local Municipal Body urged by someone to get something introduced into a Private Bill by which the inhabitants might be governed and very often irritated—the instances produced to the House showed that state of things must be put an end to, and accordingly this Committee was appointed by my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer (Sir W. Harcourt), then the Home Secretary. The Committee was intended to deal with that side of the question, and it was never intended that this Committee, because it had a little additional credit attached to it by being specially appointed, should, in other respects, have

extraordinary power, and wander into fields of legislation to the extent that has been pointed out by my right hon. Friend, and the result of which has been this enormous expenditure. I can only think that it in some degree grew out of the excessive care—perhaps the over-studious care and anxiety—of the Committee to entertain and discuss all points put before it, and that the Committee itself was sometimes misled into the belief that the extensiveness of its functions was justified by the special character attached to it. I should think the instance given by my right hon. Friend of 100 clauses struck out in a morning was the way to deal with a great number of the Bills coming before the Committee.

SIR F. S. POWELL: I did not say 100 clauses were struck out.

MR. HOPWOOD: I am sure, if it is any gratification, I should like to offer him and the other Members of the House who were Members of the Committee, every appreciation and thanks for the public service he and the other Members have rendered. But with regard to these Bills, a Municipal Body wants some improvement, and thereupon, in the discussions, in Town Council or elsewhere, with the agent it is decided to go for considerable other powers. Thereupon the agent, from his resources, ascertains whatever has been possessed in the shape of arbitrary, singular, or particular power by other Corporations, and puts it all in the Bill. There is a specimen of that in the Leeds Corporation Bill, an enormous number of clauses drawn from the statute law of the land. It seems to me absurd this House should include in a Private Bill clauses that belong to the public law of the land; and if this Instruction were not added on this occasion to reject such clauses as those, the time and labour of this Committee would be extremely multiplied and made more onerous and more harassing. My hon. Friend who has just spoken (Sir B. Samuelson) has proposed an Amendment which I have no doubt will be dealt with more effectually by my right hon. Friend on the Treasury Bench (Mr. H. H. Fowler); but it does seem to me an odd thing that we should have a Committee appointed to investigate these matters and to ascertain that there is nothing in the Bill repugnant to the general law of the land or an extension of it, and yet

someone is to do the work beforehand. My hon. Friend's Motion imposes on some official of this House the duty of investigation, which is all the more difficult unless he relies entirely on the Department reporting upon it. I do see that in some future time it may be so conducted; but to suggest on this occasion it should be thrown on any official of this House to go through clauses and ascertain and certify to his own mind, and the minds of those under whom he acts, that he is sure that Clause A does not exceed the general law, that Clause A is not repugnant to it, is not a suggestion that will commend itself to this House. I think my right hon. Friend has done immense service in drawing attention to this, and I am quite sure his trenchant remarks will bear good fruit.

\***MR. H. GLADSTONE:** Perhaps the hon. Member (Sir B. Samuelson), after the interesting discussion we have had, will withdraw his Amendment. The House will see that the Amendment is contained in the first paragraph of the Motion, and as a matter of fact I am informed, and the hon. Baronet is no doubt aware that the Home Office has to do with this question, that as there are few Bills referred to the Committee which do not contain clauses in excess of the general law, the saving in the work of the Committee would be almost *nil*.

\***SIR B. SAMUELSON:** As my purpose has been answered by calling attention to the question, I would ask leave to withdraw the Amendment.

\***MR. T. W. RUSSELL** (Tyrene, S.): Before the Amendment is withdrawn may I point out that, although this business is important, it trenches largely upon the time of private Members? I think that the Government—having taken Tuesdays and Fridays—have no right to cripple the time of private Members on Wednesday. There is no reason, if this is permitted, why Debates of this character should not go on during the whole of Wednesday. I do not offer any opposition now, but I give the Government fair notice that if this practice is adopted upon any other Wednesday I shall move the adjournment of the Debate.

**MR. MACARTNEY** (Antrim, S.): Before the Amendment is withdrawn, I would like to say that in addition to the National Education (Ireland) Bill, there is a second Bill of a most important character affecting agricultural districts, and I believe the Government have seized this opportunity for depriving those who represent agricultural districts of any chance of discussing agricultural questions. The question under discussion is one that should have been brought forward as the Public Business of the House, and not on a Wednesday as Private Business. The conduct of the Government is certainly most scandalous, and I wish to protest most earnestly against the time of the House being occupied in this manner. We have only five and a half hours left to discuss many important measures, including the Swine Fever Bill. We hear a great deal from the Government of their interest in the agricultural labourer, but we do not know that they have ever done anything so audacious in the way of neglecting his interests than they have this morning.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Main Question put, and agreed to.

Ordered, That the Committee of Selection do appoint a Committee, not exceeding Nine Members, to whom shall be committed all Private Bills promoted by Municipal and other Local Authorities, by which it is proposed to create powers relating to Police and Sanitary Regulations which deviate from, or are in extension of, or are repugnant to, the General Law.

Ordered, That the Committee have power to send for persons, papers, and records.

Ordered, That Five be the quorum of the Committee.

Ordered, That Standing Orders 150 and 173A be applicable to all Bills referred to the Committee; and that it be an Instruction to the Committee in their Report under such Standing Orders to state their Reasons for granting any powers in conflict with, deviation from, or excess of the General Law, and the text of the Clauses by which such powers are proposed to be conferred.

Ordered, That it be an Instruction to the Committee (1) that they shall not sanction in any Bill referred to them any Clauses relating to matters which are the subject of provisions in "The Infectious Disease Notification Act, 1889," "The Public Health Acts Amendment Act, 1890," "The Infectious Disease (Prevention) Act, 1890," "The Museums and Gymnasiums Act, 1891," and "The Private Street Works Act, 1892," unless the Committee report that the insertion of such Clauses ought to be allowed, with the Reasons on which their opinion is founded,

(2) that they shall not sanction in any Bill, unless they see fit to do so, in the case of Bills suspended in Session 1892, under the orders of the House of 20th June, the insertion of any provisions contained in the five Acts above cited or in any Public Act.

Ordered, That in the case of Bills reported from the Committee, three clear days shall intervene between the date when the Report of the Committee is circulated with the Votes and the consideration of the Bill.

## ORDERS OF THE DAY.

### NATIONAL EDUCATION (IRELAND)

#### BILL.—(No. 4.)

#### SECOND READING.

#### Order for Second Reading read.

**LORD FREDERICK HAMILTON** (Tyrone, N.), said this Bill, which he had the honour to move should be read a second time, was one the provisions of which were very simple, and they were demanded by the necessities of the minority in Ireland. The present National Board of Education in Ireland was in a most peculiar position. It was the only Board in the Kingdom which had large public funds under its control, and which all the while was not subject to the control of Parliament. He ventured to say that this was a most anomalous state of things. He did not believe there was any other Board which had such liberty as this. The only power that existed at present was one of veto by the Lord Lieutenant where the change of rule by the Board was of a fundamental character. Meetings on the subject-matter of the Bill had been held in many parts of the North of Ireland, and the necessity for some such change as they advocated, and as the Bill provided, excited intense interest. The Protestant Synod of Derry had passed a unanimous vote—a unanimous resolution—on this question, stating that the change was necessary on behalf of the Protestant minority in Ireland. The onus lay with those who opposed this Bill to show why the Board of Education in Ireland should be placed in a different groove from any other Board in Ireland or in the Kingdom. There was no reasonable hypothesis in the existing system; and the Government were dependent for their Parliamentary existence on the very party who had the majority in Ireland and from whom the danger they (the promoters of

the Bill) wished to avert would come and could come if that party wished. The Bill was framed on lines which would give the least inconvenience to the National Board. The first clause provided that all rules made after the passing of the Bill should be submitted to the Lord Lieutenant for approval, and he might approve, reject, or remit them to the Board. If the Lord Lieutenant rejected or remitted a rule, such rule would be void. In the case of any non-contentious rule there was absolutely no change. Such rules would merely require the formal assent of the Lord Lieutenant. The Bill further proposed that if the Lord Lieutenant should provisionally approve a rule it should come into force one month after, unless during that time a Petition praying that the rule might be laid before Parliament should be presented by one or more of the Education Commissioners. In the event of such a Petition being presented the Lord Lieutenant was to cause the rule to be laid before both Houses of Parliament, and if it should be wholly or in part disapproved of by either House of Parliament within 40 days such rule or part of a rule should be void. If the rule submitted to them was not disapproved by Parliament within 40 days the Lord Lieutenant might declare his final approbation of it. The Bill gave to any one of the representatives of religious minorities in Ireland, in the event of the Board passing a rule which in his opinion would be injurious to the interests of his particular religious body, the power of appealing to the Lord Lieutenant, and through him to Parliament. The Board in Ireland represented all creeds, but he did not think anyone could reasonably object to the control which it was thus proposed to exercise. It was certainly not unreasonable that a contentious rule should be brought before Parliament before its final adoption. It was a very simple safeguard; but it was a very necessary one. Any one who knew how strongly the Protestants of Ulster felt on this question, how strongly they were opposed to the introduction of the thin end of the wedge of denominationalism in any part of Ireland, would understand the reasonableness of this Bill. Any one who understood the horror with which the Protestants of Ulster viewed such things would under-

stand it. He might go so far as to say that he could not conceive a greater curse to Ireland than, denominational education. Children at the present time, though belonging to two religions, grew up together—Catholic and Protestant. Were they going to train up future generations to bigotry and intolerance by separating the children and so preventing them from gaining the advantages which were theirs to-day? Were they from their birth to be brought up in distinct camps, so that they might hate and loathe each other? There were one or two clear conclusions arrived at in reference to this Bill. They were making a very moderate demand, for it was a very moderate Bill. The Secretary for Scotland (Sir G. Trevelyan), speaking in the House on Monday last, said—

“Whatever shall be done shall be done with the full consent of Parliament, and with the full knowledge of Parliament.”

That was all that the promoters of this Bill asked. Members from Ulster were surprised when they heard that the Government intended to oppose the measure. The House would doubtless have some explanation from the Treasury Bench as to why the Government thought it necessary to oppose the Bill; but they might doubt whether the true explanation would be given. He hoped the Party opposite, who had been so lavish of their assurances that they wished to safeguard the rights of religious minorities, would see that there was nothing in the Bill more than Protestants generally were entitled to seek. When they came to a Division it would be seen how much genuineness and sincerity there was in those professions. He moved that the Bill be read a second time.

Motion made, and Question proposed, “That the Bill be now read a second time.”—(*Lord Frederick Hamilton.*)

\*Mr. DUNBAR BARTON (Armagh, Mid.) said that this Bill was, indeed, a very simple, unpretentious, and moderate measure. He did not see how any hon. Member could oppose it, for it only proposed that an extraordinary anomaly should be removed, and that the National Education Board should be placed under the control of Parliament and be prevented from rushing through fundamental changes in

the national education of Ireland, in a back room in Dublin, without the approval of Parliament. That was a fair proposal. If the Chief Secretary was of opinion that the Bill was too comprehensive or too stringent, it could not be opposed on that ground, for the promoters of the Bill would be willing to introduce any alterations which he might deem necessary in the interests of the National Board. They were prepared to exclude all matters of routine, all rules dealing with the classification of teachers, with the standard of efficiency, or with the programme of examinations. In fact, all matters of detail or routine they would be willing to exclude absolutely from the operation of the Bill. He did not wish for a better argument in favour of the Bill than was afforded by the speech of the President of the Local Government Board earlier in the day with reference to the Private Bills of Municipal Authorities in England. The right hon. Gentleman argued that it was most essential that Parliament should maintain its control over Municipal Authorities. Surely it was no less important in the case of a Board of Education, dealing with the education of a very large number of children in Ireland, where admittedly there were great contention and dissension upon those subjects, and great alarm with reference to the religious education of the children. Let them look at the position of the Board? From the Report of 1891 it appeared that the Parliamentary grant was over £866,000. Since then, a further sum of £200,000 had been added; and he believed he was right in adding also a further sum which was given for pensions. So that in all, more than £1,000,000 of money of the British taxpayer was going to this Board every year, and it was a startling fact that the Board should be under no Parliamentary control whatever. What other Board receiving a similar grant of money was in a similar position? Were there any exceptional circumstances that this, of all Boards, should be free from control? In England there was a Minister responsible to that House for all matters of education, and by the Elementary Education Act of 1870 regulations for the conduct of elementary schools in England were laid down by Act of Parliament and could not be altered except by Parliament. There were

many other ways by which elementary education in England might come under the cognizance of Parliament. The promoters of this Bill wished to apply a similar principle to elementary education in Ireland. They had in Ireland a Board called the Board of Intermediate Education. It was different from the National Education Board and was subsidized, not by a grant from Parliament, but out of the Church Surplus Fund.

MR. SEXTON (Kerry, N.): Given to them under statute.

MR. DUNBAR BARTON: Yes, but not voted annually by Parliament. The Board of Intermediate Education had not the powers of the National Board, but was principally a mere certificating and examining Board. Yet in the case of that Board Parliament provided that the rules should be laid before it for approval or disapproval within a reasonable time after they were made. If that were so, as they knew it was, how could it be reasonable to refuse to apply a less stringent regulation or provision to the National Board of Education which had, he would say, far more important duties to discharge. They had also the case of the Educational Endowments Commission. Under the Educational Endowments Act, the Commissioners were empowered to make certain schemes; and it was provided that if the schemes were not satisfactory they could be brought before Parliament, which reserved its right to approve or disapprove. The provisions of this Bill were not so stringent as that. They did not suggest, or provide, that every rule should be laid before the Houses of Parliament—

MR. SEXTON: That is in the Bill.

MR. DUNBAR BARTON said they did not provide for so stringent a course. They were willing that the Bill should be modified to meet the—

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (MR. JOHN MORLEY, Newcastle-upon-Tyne): All rules are provided for.

MR. DUNBAR BARTON said that it was provided that all rules should go before the Lord Lieutenant, but that the rules should not be brought before Parliament unless on the representation of a Commissioner. He had no objection to require that a Petition from two Commissioners should be requisite.

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As he had said, they only wanted that the fundamental rules should come before Parliament, and they based their claims on the precedents to which he had referred.

MR. SEXTON: The Board is formed equally of Catholics and Protestants. Surely that is fair enough?

MR. DUNBAR BARTON said the fact that they had such a Board was not sufficient reason why resolutions passed in a private room in Dublin in reference to a whole system of education should not be subject to the control of Parliament. They knew that the Powis Commission, which hon. Gentlemen behind him (the Nationalist Party) were never tired of recommending, recommended the laying of all rules before Parliament. What did the Powis Commission say on the subject? Why, that "no alteration of any rule, regulation, or bye-law should be put into operation until such alteration had been before Parliament for one month." This Commission reported in 1870, and it was always referred to by the Nationalist Members as a specially high authority. It might be asked, "Why has this question not been raised before?" and he could give an answer to that in the words of the late Chief Secretary, when moving for leave to introduce a Bill for National Education in Ireland. Referring to the National Board of Education and its past history, the right hon. Gentleman said—

"So far as I know there has never been any occasion on which difficulties have arisen either from politics or religion in connection with its administration."

That, on the whole, was a correct statement of the history of the Board. They had not hitherto travelled outside their functions as an Administrative Board. As an Administrative Board they had performed their duties, and so long as they confined themselves to administration nobody wished to interfere with them; but within the last few months they had set up an entirely new claim to be a legislative as well as an administrative body, and they desired to alter the whole system of education in Ireland. And it was on that ground that he and his friends had to appeal to Parliament. It might be said that the system of mixed education had not been a success in Ireland. Well, facts, he thought,

went to show that the system had enormously developed, and improved education in that country. It might be useful to give the House a few figures from the last report of the Commissioners. Of the schools under the National Board, 45 per cent. were mixed schools. It was said, "You should denominationalize the Board, because 55 per cent. of the schools are unmixed in their attendance. On the other hand, it was plain from these figures that the Board had not exercised its functions in an irksome or harassing manner, and that wherever the natural development of the localities had tended in the direction of denominationalization, the Board had not attempted to force the mixed system on the people. But there were 3,792 mixed schools in Ireland, and 450,000 pupils in them, and when these facts were mentioned no one could say that the mixed system had broken down, or, on the other hand, that it had been forced on the community in a harassing manner. There were 18,000 Protestant children in schools under exclusively Roman Catholic teachers; and there were 13,000 Roman Catholic children in schools under purely Protestant teachers; the rest of the 450,000 children in mixed schools being under Protestant and Roman Catholic teachers conjointly. It could not be said in face of these figures that there was no necessity for taking measures to protect the consciences of the children, whether Protestant or Catholic. He had heard a Roman Catholic clergyman admit that even from his point of view something was necessary to be done for the protection of the children of his denomination in districts in which they were in a minority. And if that were the case, it was still more necessary that something should be done for the protection of the Protestant children, as the area in which they were in a minority was larger. There could be no question that at the present moment there was great necessity for steps to be taken for protecting the consciences of children in schools under teachers of a different creed. He wished in his argument to avoid all contentious matter. The Bill had been introduced in no spirit of hostility to the Chief Secretary, or the Government, or the Nationalist Members. He did not blame the Nationalist Members if they opposed

it, but he certainly should be unable to agree with them if they said it was an unfair Bill, as it merely proposed that there should be an opportunity given of ventilating educational questions openly and in the light of day, instead of allowing them to be settled at a secret Board in Dublin, where the public could have no knowledge of what was going on. These gentlemen sitting in Dublin could alter the whole system of education in Ireland without anybody being any the wiser.

MR. J. MORLEY : The Lord Lieutenant can prevent that.

MR. DUNBAR BARTON said he did not pretend to be a greater democrat than the right hon. Gentleman, but he did ask whether they were to be told in the present day that the only protection against the secret doings of a secret body in Dublin was to be the Lord Lieutenant, who could only obtain information as to what was taking place by private communication from the Board? The Lord Lieutenant was uninformed by public opinion. The Chief Secretary might say that those who were in favour of this Bill had not suffered recently, as the Lord Lieutenant had refused his sanction to rules recently proposed. The right hon. Gentleman deserved all credit for his action in that case. But it must be remembered that by an accident public opinion was informed and aroused. The facts had leaked out. Fortunately, the hon. Member for South Tyrone (Mr. T. W. Russell) happened to obtain a copy of the proposed rules; a letter was written to *The Times*: meetings were held all over Ireland, and resolutions were passed by Episcopalians, Presbyterians, and Dissenters alike. No one who had read the writings of the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary could say that he was not in favour of religious liberty. Well, that was all the promoters of the Bill wanted. They said, "Parliament may alter the system of education, but let us be subject to the action of Parliament." Religious liberty ought to rest on the protection of Parliament, and not of any Lord Lieutenant or of any Chief Secretary. During the Debate on the Education Bill last Session the admission of the Christian Brothers' Schools to the system of education in Ireland was frequently proposed. There had been no expression of



opinion in the House adverse to those schools, and everyone would have been glad to see them obtaining the grant, if their attitude had been consistent with the fundamental principles of National Education in Ireland. Nothing had been said contrary to this, and the Christian Brothers, as a teaching institution, had never been disparaged. But surely it was not unreasonable to ask that they should obey the regulations of the National Board, especially as those regulations were obeyed by other Roman Catholic teaching orders, who received the grant. No less than 33 Monastic and Convent schools conducted by the Franciscans, the Marists and other Bodies were content to be bound by the regulations. Therefore, this was not a Catholic grievance. It was purely the grievance of one Body—the Christian Brothers, though they, no doubt, were an important teaching body. He did not think there was anything unreasonable in the attitude the late Government took up. Let the Christian Brothers obey the rules and regulations of the National Education Board—do not let those rules and regulations be destroyed to suit the wishes of one Catholic institution when all the other Catholic institutions of the country were ready to accept them. Only two proposals were made during the Debate last Session. One was that the rules should be relaxed in favour of the Christian Brothers, and this by general regulation. As he understood, however, this request was not countenanced by anyone save those who put it forward. The second proposal was that possibly an alternative Conscience Clause in an Intermediate Education Act might meet the difficulty. There was something to be said for that as the Christian Brothers did come under the Intermediate Act; but, unquestionably, if there had been any proposal to relax the regulations of the National Board the Bill might not have passed. Nothing of the kind was suggested. The right hon. Gentleman, who was at that time Leader of the House, came down and distinctly said that nothing of the kind was intended, and that the religious emblems and observances, to which objection was taken, were not to be allowed in the National Schools. The Bill passed in accordance with that statement—it would not have been passed unless those assur-

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ances had been given. Well, the Board of Education met in Dublin, and he did not know what influences had been at work upon them. A distinguished member of the Board had proposed a new rule which proposed to do the very thing which the late Leader of the House had said was not to be done. It proposed to break the very terms upon which the Bill had been passed. A new rule was introduced, the object being the alteration of the whole system of education in Ireland, or taking a long stride towards it, and introducing rules inconsistent with the fundamental principles for which they contended. It was proposed by these rules that in a large proportion of schools it was to be permitted to exhibit religious emblems, and to use school books of a sectarian and partizan character.

MR. SEXTON: No, no.

MR. DUNBAR BARTON did not wish to say a word objectionable to the hon. Member, but the hon. Member would agree they were not the books of the National Board, and were objected to by Protestants; they were books that no Protestant parent would allow his children to use. Certain religious observances would also be permissible.

MR. SEXTON: Has the right hon. Gentleman read the correspondence?

MR. DUNBAR BARTON said he had done so, and no doubt it was true that the Authorities of the Christian Brothers said, that in reference to the religious observances, if a Protestant parent objected they would have the religious observances stopped. What they meant was that a Protestant child must become a sort of pariah in a State-aided school, from causing the whole school system to be dislocated, or else he must take part in the observances which he ventured to say no fair-minded man would think it right a Protestant child should be subjected to. What they said was that the children of these working people and of the lower middle class should not have this alternative put upon them, either to go to the schools where there were these emblems and religious observances, or by their presence object to their continuance. The Chief Secretary himself, in his work on *Compromise*, expressed the point very forcibly. If a Protestant child went to one of these schools he was in danger of

being either proselytised by these emblems and observances, or boycotted for objecting to them. Of course he might stay away, but why should the son of any citizen be told he must not go to a particular State-aided school, but must go to one that was inferior. These schools were supported by public money, and these alternatives should not be put before the children who were in a minority. If they did, then they struck at the root of religious liberty. He would not follow through the whole correspondence and the matters set forth in it, as they were not material to the issue; the real question was whether Parliament ought to have any control, however slight. How had the Board proceeded in the recent case? The Board passed the proposed change by 11 votes to 6. Three Protestant members were absent, and one Protestant member, as he afterwards explained, by inadvertence, voted with the 10 Catholic Commissioners, and the change was carried by 11 to 6. The Lord Lieutenant, fortunately in this case refused to sanction the change, and it was by the merest accident it was ever known to the public. The Board immediately set about making another rule, which was worse than the first. Their second rule was open to all the objections in principle which characterised the first, because not only did it alter the system by which Parliament originally gave the grant from year to year, but it did what Parliament practically agreed should not be done. The rule was passed by 12 votes to 7, and he had heard that two Protestant Commissioners voted for it, but it could not be said that they represented Protestant opinion on the subject. The rule was protested against by resolutions passed by the Methodists, the Presbyterians, and the Episcopalians; therefore it was idle to say that it was not strongly protested against by the Protestants in Ireland. He could only repeat they would accept any Amendment, for the convenience of the National Board in their routine work, which the right hon. Gentleman might suggest. If they wished to protect religious liberty in Ireland it was absolutely necessary to place this Board under Parliamentary control.

MR. SEXTON (Kerry, N.): Mr. Speaker, we are accustomed in this House to find the Mover and Seconder of a Bill

in agreement, whatever may be the opinion of the rest of the House in regard to the measure. I think it will be admitted, in regard to the present Bill, that even at this early stage of the Debate a curious—indeed, I might almost say unexampled—situation has been developed. The noble Lord (Lord F. Hamilton), the Mover, and the learned Gentleman (Mr. Dunbar Barton), the Seconder, of the Bill, do not stand upon common ground.

Notice taken, that 40 Members were not present; House counted, and 40 Members being found present,

MR. SEXTON: I had said, Sir, and I repeat it now that the learned Gentleman (Mr. Dunbar Barton) has returned, that the noble Lord the Mover of the Bill, and the learned Gentleman the Member for Armagh do not stand upon common ground. The noble Lord, less experienced than the learned Gentleman, has stood firm by his Bill, but the learned Gentleman, more ingenious than the noble Lord, and less bold, has run away from the main propositions of the Bill. Sir, the proposal of the Bill is with regard to every rule and with regard to every amendment or alteration of a rule, that the Board of National Education in Ireland, even though the Lord Lieutenant—the chief of the Executive Government, the representative of the majority of this House—should agree with the Board as to the necessity of making or altering a rule, that the Board should be obliged to come to this Parliament, and even if the Representative Chamber should agree with them, the House of Lords, a totally non-representative Assembly, should have power, by objecting to the rule, to overbear the opinion, first, of the Department of State created by Royal Charter; secondly, of the chief of the Executive of Ireland; and, thirdly, of this Representative Chamber itself. Well, the learned Gentleman readily perceived that that issue could not be defended, and now he prays not that every rule, but that every fundamental rule, or that every change and amendment or repeal of a fundamental rule, should come within the scope of this Bill. I ask the learned Gentleman to tell the House who is to determine what is fundamental and what is not. This House even if it adopted the Bill would lay up for itself a store of

trouble, because if the National Board of Education in Ireland adopted or altered a rule, no matter how ordinary or trivial, if it touched the susceptibility of any Member of this House, or any constituency, or any person whose influence a Member was inclined to admit, it would be open to any Member in this House to rise up and occupy time with a discussion as to whether the alteration made by the Board was a fundamental alteration. I venture to think, Sir, that troublesome as the Irish Question has been hitherto to this House, it would become in the future, even in an attenuated form, a source of greater trouble. The second point on which the noble Lord and I are not agreed is as to the means by which the subject is to be brought under the notice of Parliament. The proposal in the Bill is that any one Commissioner out of 20, notwithstanding that the other 19 are agreed, and the Lord Lieutenant has approved—any one Commissioner—and we know, Mr. Speaker, that in Boards as in Legislatures a crank may occasionally be found—any one Commissioner would be entitled to hale up before the Imperial Parliament his 19 colleagues and the chief of the Executive Government of the country. The learned Gentleman, who professes to speak the universal feeling of the Protestants of Ireland made a most fantastic suggestion. He had to admit that the Board of Education, composed of 20 members, has upon it 10 Protestant gentlemen, and 10 others who are Catholics, but he evidently is not inclined to rest the protection of Protestant interests in the matter of education upon the fact that half the Board is composed of gentlemen of that creed. No, Sir, he raised the question that only two are Methodists.

MR. JORDAN (Meath, S.): There is only one.

MR. SEXTON: Are we to understand then that Protestants who are not Methodists, Protestants constituted by Royal Charter, appointed by the Lord Lieutenant himself, that Protestants who are not Methodists are not to be trusted with the protection of the interests of education or any other matter of Protestants who are Methodists? Why, Sir, the tone of the Debate, the speeches of the noble Lord and the hon. and learned Gentleman, asserted the solidarity of Protestantism.

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They spoke, they said, for the United Protestant Body, and yet because the whole 10 are not Methodists—because the whole 10 do not belong to some particular Protestant sect—it is to be inferred that 10 Protestants belonging to various sects are not to be trusted to defend the rights of Protestants as a whole. I say that suggestion would be spurned by the Protestants of Ireland. They do stand together on this question, and I think the contention put forward by the hon. and learned Gentleman would not be accepted by them. I think he is not a faithful and trustworthy spokesman of their views. The speech of the hon. and learned Gentleman, he will forgive me for saying so, was in no way reliable as a statement of facts, but I confess it was remarkable as a work of imagination. He spoke, Sir, as if some secret plot had been put forward. I may turn aside for one moment to say that if any secret plot has been going forward, and if the interests of any section of Irish Protestants have for the moment been placed in danger, which I emphatically deny, that danger has arisen from the initiation of the right hon. Gentleman the late Chief Secretary for Ireland, who looked extremely uneasy during the speech of the hon. and learned Gentleman. And if there was danger, which I again deny, the gentleman who interposed to avert the danger was the right hon. Gentleman the present Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant. What has been done in secret? How did this affair begin? The subject was raised in this House last year on the First Reading of the Irish Education Bill. It was debated again on the Second Reading; it was thrashed out in Committee, and it was raised again upon the Report. There were four different Debates on the subject in the House last year, and the right hon. Gentleman the late Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant gave a public pledge that with the view of making an effort to introduce certain rules into schools under the jurisdiction of the Commissioners he would invite the Commissioners to consider whether they could not embody in their rules and regulations the Conscience Clause of the Intermediate Education Act. The right hon. Gentleman the late Chief Secretary wrote a letter in consequence. That letter is dated 11th

August, and in it the right hon. Gentleman stated—

"During the passage through the House of Commons of the National Education Bill, 1892, attention was called to the position of certain schools, which from not complying with the existing regulations with regard to religious instruction did not participate in the grant made by Parliament for elementary education in Ireland. On behalf of Her Majesty's Government, I promised that you should be invited to consider whether, in the rules and regulations of your Board relating to religious instruction, the clause on that subject in the Intermediate Education (Ireland) Act, 1878, could be embodied."

I am not an advocate of the secret proceedings of the Board, or of any public Boards, and if any public inconvenience arises from the secrecy of the proceedings of this Board I should say that the way to end any inconvenience would be to oblige the Board to publish the Minutes of their proceedings relating to any public matter, and not to take away from the Irish Department and the Irish Executive a question which, if any question does, concerns the people of Ireland, and which some Irish authority ought to determine. I should have no objection if the Board were obliged to publish the Minutes of their proceedings and any correspondence between the Lord Lieutenant and the Board with regard to alterations, or suggested alterations, of rules. The remedy, in this case, of the evil, if there is an evil in secrecy, will be to abandon secrecy and let everybody be aware either that the Board wish to alter an important rule, or that the Lord Lieutenant proposes to give his consent to an alteration. One would have supposed, from the eloquence and fire of the speech of the hon. and learned Member—qualities which I must admit were absent from the speech of the noble Lord—that some grievance had been suffered. I ask what is the grievance, and who has suffered any wrong? The Commissioners no doubt proposed to alter a rule. The Lord Lieutenant declined to accept the alteration. He did so upon the ground that there was no near approach to unanimity. If the condition of a near approach to unanimity be necessary for the making of a rule in a case where 10 Protestants are members of a Board composed of 20 members I should say that the protection afforded by the present system is complete. The decision of the Commis-

sioners was not accepted. The Lord Lieutenant interposed his veto, and it is upon the interposition of that veto, which prevented the resolution taking effect, that hon. Gentlemen proposed to take away the power of the Lord Lieutenant, and provide that upon the objection of any one gentleman out of the 20 comprising the Board the power of the Imperial Parliament should be called into requisition. I contest the claim both of the noble Lord and the hon. and learned Gentleman to speak for the Protestants of Ireland. I say that if we are to touch the question of denominational education the whole course of the administration of the system in Ireland shows that the people of Ireland where they have the choice, whether Protestants or Catholics, do prefer the denominational system. And all over Ireland the practically denominational schools have grown in number, and they are now in a majority. Why, in the Province of Ulster, for which the hon. and learned Gentleman professes to speak, the desire for denominational schools has been most emphatically expressed. The effort, as the Chief Secretary expresses it, has been continuous and successful, and the number of denominational schools in Ulster under the National Board compared with the number 25 or 30 years ago is actually five times as great. The facts cited by the learned Gentleman, that there are only 80,000 Catholic children in Ireland in schools taught by Protestant teachers, and only 30,000 Protestant children in schools taught by Catholic teachers, shows that wherever the most energetic effort can secure it, denominational schools are substituted for mixed schools. There is another reason why I say that they do not speak for Protestants. The hon. and learned Gentleman suggested that the Rev. Dr. Stubbs, in sanctioning the proposed change, had acted through inadvertence.

MR. DUNBAR BARTON: The first time, not the second.

MR. SEXTON: Why the hon. and learned Gentleman says the second change is worse than the first. The first change was comparatively trivial, and then the rev. gentleman acted through inadvertence, but the second change was worse, and then the rev. gentleman acted deliberately. The second change was carried by 12 gentlemen, of whom

10 were Catholics and two Protestants. The hon. Member for South Tyrone (Mr. T. W. Russell) was ever an earnest champion of Protestant rights, but I doubt whether he is as earnest, and I do not think he is as competent, a champion of these rights as the Rev. Dr. Stubbs, Senior Fellow of Trinity College, Dublin, a gentleman living in Ireland all his life, an eminent ecclesiastic, a distinguished scholar, and a gentleman who has all his life been engaged in the work of Protestant education.

**LORD FREDERICK HAMILTON :** Episcopalian.

**MR. SEXTON :** Episcopalian, the noble Lord says ; I thought the noble Lord claimed to speak the universal feeling of Protestants. If the Protestants of Ireland are so split up between themselves that there is no feeling of solidarity amongst them how can the noble Lord or any other man profess to speak on their behalf ? I think it will not be seriously contended that the Senior Fellow of Trinity College, Dublin, is not as careful a guardian of the rights of any Protestant subject as even the noble Lord. If we take the other Protestant gentleman who voted for the change, who is he ? He was a man than whom there is no more distinguished lawyer nor clearer thinker to be found in Ireland, Lord Justice Fitzgibbon, the Lord Justice of Appeal in Ireland. Now, the hon. and learned Gentleman the Member for Armagh (Mr. Barton) is no doubt a distinguished member of the Irish Bar, but I doubt whether he himself would claim either in regard to the question of the administration of the question of education, or in regard to any interest of the Protestants of Ireland, to set himself up against the head of his own profession. I think even this House will agree that Lord Justice Fitzgibbon is at least as trustworthy and competent a judge of the interests of Irish Protestants as even the hon. and learned Member for Armagh. Upon these grounds I dispute the claim of the noble Lord and the hon. and learned Gentleman to speak for the Protestants of Ireland. I say the Protestants of Ireland are united on this matter. I say they are united, and their practice proves it, in preferring denominational education ; and where they can have a denominational system they have strained every

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exertion, especially in Ulster, to substitute for a mixed an unmixed attendance in the schools. While the Protestants of Ireland are united in opposition to the noble Lord and the learned Gentleman, I say that the pretext of the learned Gentleman that the interests of no Protestant sect in Ireland can be protected except by the members of that particular sect, is a theory advanced for the first time in this House ; it is a theory at variance with the whole history of the question as between Catholics and Protestants, and it is a theory which I think the Irish Protestants in general will emphatically condemn. Now, Sir, I must observe that this proposal is put forward at a very singular time. It is put forward upon the eve of considering a Bill which proposes to give the Irish people legislative control of the administrative care of the affairs of Ireland. Of course, my learned Friend is not responsible for that Bill, but my learned Friend and his Party are responsible for this, that the alternative which they offer to the Home Rule Bill is to extend to Ireland a Bill which will give her extended powers of local administration, and they now propose to remove the making of a trivial rule out of the sphere of Irish administration, and to place it in the power of one or two members of the Board, to drag the whole Board here, even though the Lord Lieutenant may approve of the rule they pass.

**MR. DUNBAR BARTON :** I only said that the rules should be laid on the Table of the House.

**MR. SEXTON :** I will not quarrel with the hon. Gentleman about the terms. I said dragged. If he likes to say drawn, or invited, I do not quarrel about the word, or to be brought here—is that an objectionable word ?

**MR. DUNBAR BARTON :** Not the Commissioners.

**MR. SEXTON :** I do not suggest that the Commissioners are to be brought here. The rule they make is to be brought here, and their authority and the authority of the Lord Lieutenant is to be set at nought ; and one man—any one crank—may be at liberty to disregard the opinions of his colleagues, and be at liberty to take the initiative. I think that is an unreasonable proposition, and what is additionally unreasonable is that, even though this Chamber should unani-

mously agree to the rule, the House of Lords, which may be constituted by three Members—any two Peers—may upset it. It is surprising to me, considering what happened last year, that any Tory Member should have the audacity to rise up in this House and make this proposition. Who is the architect, the apostle of the situation, who proposed a fundamental change in the system of education in Ireland? The right hon. Gentleman, who sits so meek and modest on the Front Opposition Bench, the late Chief Secretary for Ireland. So far from finding fault with his action I say it was essential to this case. For what is the case? The House has passed an Act for free and compulsory education in Ireland. That only applied to the cities and towns in Ireland, and in these cities and towns the Catholic boys are taught by the Christian Brothers. The Catholic parent has no option but to send his children to the Christian Brothers schools or to a school to which he has a conscientious objection, and it was pointed out that in these cities and towns the Education Act, if it does not become a dead letter, will be fatally hampered in its application, because when you have established free education the Catholic parent will say that he will not send his child to the Christian Brothers schools, where, in the absence of any grant, he would be called on to pay a fee, and that, on the other hand, he will not send his boy to a school to which he has a conscientious objection. There are two schools in the place, to one of which he is willing to send his boy, but at which a fee must be paid, and the other is one to which he has a conscientious objection; and the end will be that the Free Compulsory Education Act so far from assisting the interests of education in Ireland will very seriously prejudice them. The right hon. Gentleman saw that prospect, and he invited the Commissioners of National Education to consider whether by a certain alteration in their rules the schools of the Christian Brothers could not be brought into conformity with the national system, and placed in line with the other schools. But the right hon. Gentleman not only acted in accordance with the reason of the case but in accordance with the principles of his Party. Might I remind the House that the right hon. Gentleman

the late Leader of the House, in a speech delivered on the latest day of the Session of 1889, speaks in regard to the rights of Ireland upon primary education in a manner which is totally irreconcilable with what is laid down by the noble Lord and the learned Member to-day. I would cite the speech of the late Leader of the House delivered in 1889—

“There was one principle which the Tories held as earnestly as the Party to which Mr. Parnell belonged, and for which they might well be found fighting side by side.”—

we are not fighting side by side to-day, we are fighting face to face—

“and that was the principle of religious education, and on that question the Tory Party and the Parnellite Party were absolutely at one, and united as they were on that subject they were divided by a wide impassable gulf from the Radicals.”

We shall see now, when an effort is being made to fit education in Ireland to the local circumstances of the country without prejudice to religious principle, whether the Radicals are not those who reasonably recognise the principle, and not the Party represented by the gentleman who made that speech. We are told that the Member for South Tyrone is the real author of this Bill. After hearing the speeches of the noble Lord, and of the learned Gentleman, I am inclined to think that they are not the authors, because neither betrayed that acquaintance with the scope of the Bill which would be naturally supposed to belong to paternity. Now, I believe that the hon. Gentleman opposite is a Member of the Party led by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham. I ask him to apply himself to this public utterance of the right hon. Member for West Birmingham—

“I believe that there are two questions not local in any narrow sense which require local and exceptional treatment in Ireland, and which cannot be dealt with to the satisfaction of the Irish people in the Imperial Parliament.”

The proposition made to-day is that in the ordinary alteration of the rule of a Board in Ireland the intervention of the Imperial Parliament should be invoked—

“And amongst these questions are the education question and the land question, and I would not hesitate to transfer their consideration and solution in Ireland to an Irish Board, altogether independent of English Government and influence.”

The proposition of the Leader of the Party to which the Member for South Tyrone belongs is this: that the Irish Board ought to be allowed to make rules even without the assent of the Lord Lieutenant; but the proposition made to-day is that even when the Lord Lieutenant agrees with the Board, and even when the House of Commons agrees, the House of Lords may be in a position to overbear the will of the Irish Board, of the Lord Lieutenant, and of the House of Commons. What were the opinions of the Member for South Tyrone on this subject in the long past days? His recent career has so obscured them that they are forgotten. When he was the Radical candidate for Preston he said—

"If there is any man in this town not a Catholic himself, knowing Catholic scruples upon the matter of education, I am that man. I have lived amongst Catholics. Many of my dearest friends are Catholics. I know what their views are about education, and I respect them. Let there be no mistake about this matter. I repeat, I am not in favour of divorcing education from religion."

And, again, upon the same subject he said—

"I will frankly concede the demand of the Catholic Bishops in the matter of education. In brief, upon the education question I say you must have respect to the people of the country, no matter what your own individual theories may be. I wish to see the substitution of Local Authorities all over the country more in touch with the people, and though I am certain that many blunders will be made at first, still I recognise that the only way the people can be taught in these matters is to allow them to have the chance of trying."

What chance does it give to Irish opinion, to Irish administration, or to Irish Government, if you allow one crank Commissioner and two torpid Peers to make void the decision of 19 Commissioners out of the 20, the decision of the Lord Lieutenant, speaking for the Executive, and the decision of the House of Commons? I say that a more fantastic proposal was never brought to the notice of the House. Suggestions have been made that some injury is intended to Protestant interests. What is the proposal made? It was pointed out in the Debate last year that the primary schools in Great Britain received aid from the public purse, and were conducted upon a principle substantially identical

with that under the Irish Intermediate Act. The schools of the Christian Brothers do work under the Intermediate Act. They satisfy the regulations of the Statute, and both the right hon. Gentleman the late Chief Secretary for Ireland and the Leader of the Tory Party in the House avowed in speeches last year that the Conscience Clause in the Intermediate Act was as stringent as need be desired, and that it was impossible to suggest that any danger could arise from the Conscience Clause then suggested.

\*MR. JACKSON (Leeds, N.): Neither of the speeches bore the interpretation which the hon. Member suggests. What we did say was that we could see little difference between the Conscience Clause of the Intermediate Education Act and the Conscience Clause of the proposed Bill.

MR. SEXTON: I have not the speech of the right hon. Gentleman, but I have the speech of his Leader, and what his Leader said was—

"That he did not here express an opinion upon this Conscience Clause, but that he might say that no one had pretended that the Conscience Clause embodied in the Act of 1878, which was accepted by all sections of Irish opinion at the time, and which had not been criticised by any section of Irish opinion—no one had pretended that this was a clause less stringent in its character, or less capable of affording protection to children of whatever denomination."

That was the testimony of the Tory Leader, and it received the universal assent of the Tory Party. What will the House think of the statements that have been made to-day, when I say that the effort, the sole effort, of the National Board was to substitute that clause in their rules and regulations for certain existing rules which were in operation. I shall read the proposal which was made by the National Board. I find at page 10 on the paper—

"No pupil attending at school shall be permitted to remain in the school during the time of any religious instruction which the parents or guardian of such pupil shall not sanction."

There the absence of the pupil from religious instruction is secured unless the parents or guardian consents; and, secondly, the time for religious instruction shall be so fixed that no pupil remaining in attendance shall be excluded directly or indirectly from the secular instruction given in such school. That is substantially the principle of primary

education in Great Britain. But the Commissioners were not satisfied with that, because they proposed to retain a rule to the effect that no pupil registered as a Protestant should remain in attendance in a Catholic school during the time of the religious instruction, and that no pupil registered as a Catholic should remain in attendance in a Protestant school during the time of religious instruction, and that in no case should any pupil remain in attendance at any religious instruction to which the parent or guardian did not agree. That was the gist of the proposal. That was the protection which the new rule intended to afford, by which the interests of the Protestants were to be guarded, and I invite any Member of this House to show in what respect that rule is defective, or anything calculated to displace the contention of the present Leader of the Tory Party in this House last year, that that rule is as stringent as could be devised and that no injury can arise out of it. As I have said, the Lord Lieutenant declined to accept the suggested rule on the principle that there was not as near an approach to unanimity as the nature of the case required. I submit that if that is the principle on which the Irish Executive acts upon a Board composed of 20 gentlemen, 10 of whom are Protestants, that that principle affords the most complete protection. I invite Members on the opposite side of the House who may speak on this question to point out if they can in what way the application of that principle would leave open any source of danger. The gentlemen who have spoken on behalf of this Bill profess to speak on behalf of the Protestants of Ireland. I must point out that the second proposal of the National Board was considered by a Committee, and this Committee, composed of six gentlemen, three Catholics and three Protestants, were unanimous on the matter. The Catholics were the Lord Chief Baron of Ireland, the permanent head of the Department, the Resident Commissioner, a man of unequalled experience, and Mr. Sheridan, for many years Inspector or Secretary to the Board. The Protestant members were the Lord Chief Justice of Appeal, the Senior Fellow of Trinity College, and County Court Judge Shaw. That Committee of six gentlemen, not debating

the matter briefly upon a Wednesday afternoon, but after devoting five long sittings to it, after correspondence with the Church Education Society and the Christian Brothers, came to the unanimous conclusion to make the second suggestion.

\*MR. T. W. RUSSELL (Tyrone, S.): Not unanimously.

MR. SEXTON: Well, perhaps not quite unanimously, but I think what I am about to say will convince the House that the decision of the majority was more significant even than if it had been unanimous, because on one side we had the Lord Chief Baron, the Resident Commissioner of the National Board, the late Secretary of the National Board—Catholics; and then you had the Lord Chief Baron and the Senior Fellow of Trinity College—Protestants; and upon the other side we find a County Court Judge. [*Nationalist cheers and laughter.*] It is an interesting fact that the County Court Judge was the gentleman who by placing 360 votes upon a certain register presented the hon. Member for South Tyrone with a seat in this House.

MR. T. W. RUSSELL: The hon. Member forgets that the Court of Appeal upheld that decision.

MR. SEXTON: The Revising Barrister has the power to amend or not to amend; and he declined to amend and to allow the Court of Appeal to consider the case. His refusal to amend put the question outside the Court of Appeal.

MR. CARSON (Dublin University): I rise to Order.

MR. SEXTON: So well you may rise to Order.

MR. CARSON: I wish to ask you, Mr. Speaker, is it permitted by the Rules of this House for an hon. Member to attack a County Court Judge in Ireland.

MR. SPEAKER: There has been no contravention of Order.

MR. SEXTON: The learned Gentleman (Mr. Carson) is new to this Assembly. He has not yet apparently realised the fact that this is not a Coercion Court.

SIR THOMAS LEA (Londonderry, S.): I rise to Order, Mr. Speaker. Is the hon. Member entitled to discuss the decision of a County Court Judge on a Debate on an Education Bill?



MR. SPEAKER did not interpose.

MR. SEXTON: I was quoting, when I was interrupted, one or two general facts to show that the solitary dissent of this County Court Judge ought not to sway the judgment of the House, and I repeat, whether I look at the gentleman as a Revising Barrister, as a County Court Judge, or as a Commissioner of this Board, that his opinion must command no weight when we consider the character and position of the five gentlemen opposed to him. The object of the regulations was to bring the Church Education Schools and the Christian Brothers Schools within the National system. The Church Education Society informed the Board that they will be satisfied with a strictly religious system. I wish to make the case of the Christian Brothers quite clear, because I think the Member for North Armagh obscured the case to some extent. These zealous and most successful instructors of youth, these precursors of the primary schools, these men who for 30 years before ever a National Education system was started, gave the rudiments of instruction to the children of the Irish people, these men who formed the link between the old lady's school where the children bawled the alphabet exposed to all the inclemency of the weather,—who formed the link between those two systems of education—these men who developed their system and made it successful; and what is the provision now respecting them? I say that in dealing with them regard must be had to the fact that they were an established body. Remember that they teach 30,000 children, and remember that if some arrangement is not made to bring them into line with the others it may lead to complications, because other schools may not be open to them, and remember that the conscience of an Irish peasant is as much entitled to be considered and respected as the conscience of the hon. Member for North Armagh. What was the offer made on behalf of the Christian Brothers? They offered, first, to have their schools inspected by officers of State, to have their pupils examined, that in future members of their Institute should be examined and classified. They offered to separate secular from religious instruction, and that in any case where a Protestant appears in any of their schools they are

willing to provide that the religious instruction shall take place before the secular instruction. They further agreed that the practice of prayer at the strike of the clock at certain hours shall not take place. With regard to the books used in their schools, they are willing to submit them to the Board of National Education, although the Rules of the Board do not require them to use any particular set of books. They are willing to remove from their books any matter which might be considered to be controversial, and to make special regulations wherever Protestant children attend their schools. I am anxious to hear how much further they should be asked to go. With regard to the question of religious emblems—such, for instance, as the crucifix or a picture or statue of the Redeemer—I would be surprised to hear that these emblems should properly be held to exclude a primary school from assistance by the State, if the regulations of that school were such as to give conclusive security against any invasion of the rights of conscience. One of the proposals in the Bill is that any fundamental rule may be voided by a dissenting Commissioner. The position taken up by the gentlemen who support this Bill is this: that one Englishman (the Lord Lieutenant), sent over to Ireland as the representative of a political Party in this country, shall have the power to overbear the opinions of the 10 Protestant representatives on the Board, and that there shall be no appeal. I say the men who take up that position are not entitled to speak on behalf of the Protestants of Ireland. Power is given in the Bill that when the Lord Lieutenant does agree a dissenting Commissioner may compel him to bring the matter before Parliament. If the rule is brought to Parliament it must lie for 40 days on the Table of this House, which alone has to spend the public money, and the House is of opinion the rule should stand, a majority of the House of Lords, no matter how constituted, may bring the rule to naught. At this stage of the 19th century, at this stage of political ideas and when the continuation of the House of Lords is a matter of acute criticism, and its prolonged existence is a matter of doubt, I think any gentleman who makes such a proposal shows more courage than discretion. Suppose

the House of Lords and the House of Commons make different amendments. I can well conceive that what is called a fundamental rule coming from Ireland in existing religious conditions may be amended in one sense by this House, and in another sense by the House of Lords, and it may be turned into nonsense by irreconcilable amendments, and the Lord Lieutenant has no option except to take that nonsense and make it the law of the land. The gentlemen who propose this fantastic system for furthering the growth of Irish education propose in the 8th Clause of the Bill that every rule hitherto made in the 50 years of the existence of the National Board should have the force of Statute Law. There are 250 rules of existence, and these rules are hanging on supplemental regulations, some of them very curious in their provisions. The Board was infallible in the past and down to the present day, but for the future they are to be regarded with fundamental mistrust. Everything that they have done up to the present day is right, but with regard to the future the rift within the lute has become so wide that they must be regarded with deep distrust; and for the future any rule which they may make, or any suggestion or amendment of theirs, is not to be trusted without the concurrence of both Houses of Parliament. This is a most fantastic and most inapt proposition. I can only suggest to the gentlemen who are concerned in this folly, that when next they occupy the time of the House with any legislative proposal, that whatever their proposal may be they will, at least, propose some rational mode of carrying out their objects. What would be the effect of this proposal? You passed an Education Act last year. That Act comes into force next year. These Commissioners have power under that Act to make rules upon various important subjects. The proposal now is to repeal that Statute in that respect. That power was deliberately given them by the Statute passed last year, and it is proposed now to take away that power. Very well. That Act does not come into force until next year. It is highly probable the Commissioners would not be in a position to make rules until the summer or autumn. If they make rules in the summer or autumn, what happens then? Instead of putting rules into

force with the concurrence of the Lord Lieutenant they will be obliged to wait till next year, because they could not be confirmed until they had lain for 40 days upon the Table of the House of Commons and the House of Lords, and thus they could not come into force till March or April. But the Education Act comes into force on the 1st January, and the first result would be, that having last year deliberately passed a Statute to bring into force an extension of the primary system on the 1st of January next year, and having confided that power to an Irish department, subject to the revision of the Executive Department, you are now asked, half a year afterwards, to pass a Statute by which the former Statute in that respect is to be repealed, by which the power of the Irish Department, the power of the Lord Lieutenant, and, I may add, the power of this Chamber itself, is to be set aside by a chance majority of the House of Lords. The proposition is entirely fantastic and intolerable, and it is made in the face of the declaration made on this subject in this House and in the country by the leaders of the Party to which the promoters of this Bill belong. I therefore feel I shall carry with me the full concurrence of the House when I move that the Bill be read a second time this day six months.

Amendment proposed, to leave out the word "now," and at the end of the Question to add the words "upon this day six months."—(*Mr. Sexton.*)

Question proposed, "That the word 'now' stand part of the Question."

\**Mr. T. W. RUSSELL* (Tyrone, S.) said that if the hon. Member who had just spoken had stood there as the representative of West Belfast he might have been considered to have some title to speak for the Protestant community of Ireland. But since he was relegated to the other end of the country, where there were hardly any Protestants, it required a good deal of something resembling assurance for the hon. Member to stand up and deny to the 23 gentlemen elected by the Protestants of Ireland the right of representing them in the House on this question. He thought that would be too much for even the majority on the Ministerial side of the House to swallow. Who, according to

the hon. Member for North Kerry, represented the Protestants of Ireland on this question? The promoters of the Bill were elected, at all events, by the votes of the Protestants of Ireland. Neither Lord Justice Fitzgibbon nor Dr. Stubbs held his position on the Education Board by the votes of any body; both were simply appointed by the Lord Lieutenant. But matters were rather worse than that, for the action of Dr. Stubbs and Lord Justice Fitzgibbon had been disowned by the Protestant community of Ireland. These nominated gentlemen had been disowned by the people they professed to represent on the Board, and when they found that the whole of the Presbyterians and the Methodists of Ireland had condemned these gentlemen in common with the Episcopalians, he wanted to know what right, or title, or claim they had, disowned as they were by those supposed to be their constituents, but over whom their constituents had no power, being nominated and not elected. What right, or title, or claim, he asked, had these two gentlemen to represent the Protestants of Ireland, and not the twenty-three gentlemen who represented them in the House of Commons? Dr. Stubbs had openly avowed that in all he had done on the Education Board he had been acting in the interests of the Church Education Society. He had not a word to say against the Church Education Society, but the House should know there were 15,000 children in the schools of the Society throughout Ireland outside the National Board, because they would not comply with the rules of the National Board. They wanted to teach the Bible and the Catechism to the children at all hours of the day, and under all circumstances, and they refused to be bound by any rules whatever that would restrict them in that right. Dr. Stubbs had, therefore, joined the Roman Catholic Members of the Education Board simply and solely with the object of getting public money for these schools which were sectarian and Protestant in education, and those who represented the Protestants of Ireland in the House of Commons had quite as much objection to sectarian Protestant education as to sectarian Catholic education in schools supported by public money. That was what Lord Justice

Fitzgibbon and Dr. Stubbs aimed at, and they had never made the slightest secret of it. He wanted the House fairly to consider what the real question at issue was. The question was not whether denominational education was right or wrong, it was a simple question, and the House would not be able to escape from it. The question was this: was the National Board of Education in Ireland a purely administrative Board, which had no legislative powers whatever, not elected by the people, but nominated by the Lord Lieutenant, and which carried on its work by virtue of the grant of a million of money from this House, sitting in a back room in Marlborough Street, Dublin—had such a body the right to upset the fundamental principle on which National Education in Ireland had been carried on for 60 years, supported by this House? and was it to be said that this non-representative and non-elected body had power to do this without legislation and behind the back of Ireland? That was a question from which the House could not possibly escape. The Chief Secretary for Ireland had said that the proceedings of the Board in this matter were not held in secret. They were not held in secret, but they would have been if the Board had had its way. What took place? A letter addressed to the Board of Education by the late Chief Secretary (Mr. Jackson) was sent to the Commissioners; nobody outside the Irish Office or Dublin Castle had known that that letter had been sent—nobody could, in any way, have known it—it had been entirely, so far as the public were concerned, a private communication. There had been no public notice of it in any way whatever. On the receipt of that letter the Board of Education proceeded to consider it in private, and the Lord Chief Baron of Ireland gave notice of a resolution in regard to that letter. That resolution of the Lord Chief Baron might have been considered in private, a decision might have been arrived at in private, and the powers of the Lord Lieutenant might have been invoked in private, and the public would never have heard of it save for an accident by which a copy of the resolution had reached them.

MR. T. M. HEALY (Louth, N.): It was published in *The Freeman* the next day.

Mr. T. W. RUSSELL said the hon. Member had made a statement that he could not substantiate in the House. The first notice of that resolution was not in *The Freeman's Journal* at all, it came out by a pure accident, and beyond all doubt the whole question might have been considered by the Board in private; the Lord Lieutenant's action would have been private, and the public would have known nothing about the matter, only, as he had said, for an accident.

Mr. SEXTON: The proceedings of the meeting of the Board were sent to the Press by one of the Commissioners.

Mr. T. W. RUSSELL said the hon. Member was usually accurate, but sometimes he fell into a slight inaccuracy, as he did on the present occasion. What the Commissioner, Mr. Inglis, did was that he declared that if the Board did not publish the proceedings he would take the responsibility of publishing them; but that was after the Board had considered the matter, and after the whole thing had come out in the public Press. He would ask the House to get rid of the question of denominational or mixed education, and let them consider fairly and squarely whether a public body not elected by the people, but nominated by the Lord Lieutenant, had a right in private—behind the public and behind this House, which supplied them with the money for carrying on the work—the right to upset the fundamental principle of this system of education which had existed in Ireland for 60 years under the control and sanction of Parliament. It would be necessary to assume that hon. Members knew nothing about the system of National Education in Ireland. The fundamental principle of the National system of education, as contained in the first rule of the Charter granted in 1831, was that there should be combined secular and separate religious and moral instruction in the same school. Under Rule 4 it was enacted that there should be no change made in the fundamental rules without the sanction of the Lord Lieutenant. He did not question the right of the Board to change the fundamental rules with the sanction of the Lord Lieutenant, but he contended that the principle upon which the system was founded could not be con-

strued as a mere rule. He considered the whole of the proceedings of the Board were *ultra vires*. He would now consider how the whole question arose. At the close of last Session the Education Bill, introduced and carried by the late Government, was under discussion. Nearly the whole of the Ulster Members were absent from the House—a great but unavoidable misfortune—and the Government were pressed—he did not say unduly—to admit the schools of the Christian Brothers to the benefits accruing from connection with the National Board. No one then or since ever said a word against them or their schools in the House. He, himself, said he considered that the education given by them was a sound education. The right hon. Gentleman who was then Chief Secretary undertook to send a letter to the Board of National Education in Ireland, and did so. It was dated 11th August, 1892, and read—

“During the passage through the House of Commons of the National Education Act, 1892, attention was called to the position of certain schools which, through not complying with the existing regulations of your Board relating to religious instruction, do not participate in the grants made by Parliament for Elementary Education in Ireland. On behalf of Her Majesty's Government, I promised that you should be entitled to consider whether, under the rules and regulations of your Board relating to religious instruction, the clause on that subject contained in the Intermediate Education (Ireland) Act, 1878, could be embodied.”

He did not blame the right hon. Gentleman for writing that letter, nor did he blame the House, constituted as it was, for sanctioning it.

Mr. T. M. HEALY: It was written after the vote of censure was moved by the Home Secretary.

Mr. T. W. RUSSELL, continuing, said it was so, but it was undertaken to be written during the Debate on the Education Act. But it might have occurred to the right hon. Gentleman that, even had the Christian Brothers consented to adopt that Conscience Clause, the mere adoption of it—[An hon. MEMBER: They have consented]—brought them not one step nearer to the National Board, and the Commissioners pointed that out in their answer to the right hon. Gentleman who is now Chief Secretary. What, he asked, were the rules and regulations at present in use by the

Board? In the first place, there was a complete separation by a time-table of the secular and religious instruction for four hours on five days in the week; secondly, the use of school-books sanctioned by the Board and free from the tinge of sectarianism; and, thirdly, the prohibition in all national schools during the hours of secular instruction of the use of denominational emblems and images, and the religious rites and ceremonies peculiar to any Church. The Christian Brothers had not, up to that very moment consented to remove the images. He thought the right hon. Gentleman might have known that would not settle the question. The moment that letter came before the Board there was an absolute resurrection of dead men to consider it. Every Roman Catholic member turned up for the first time almost in the history of the Board. But instead of considering the letter they at once proceeded to consider something very different. The Lord Chief Baron proposed a rule, which was not passed by the Lord Lieutenant, dealing not only with the Christian Brothers' schools, which was the only thing referred to in the letter of the Chief Secretary, but proposing to introduce fundamental changes in the whole system of education in the national schools. The claim advanced by the Roman Catholic hierarchy during the last four or five years had been that where schools were denominational in attendance they ought to be denominational in theory. In fact, that was what the Chief Baron's resolution came to. Here was a system sanctioned by Charter and by Parliament, which was not a denominational, but a mixed system; and a proposal like this, made by a non-representative Board in a back room in Marlborough Street, ought not to have been made. He had never held that they must stick resolutely to the mixed system in Ireland, but he had, in and out of the House, maintained that if denominational education had to be adopted it should be done fairly and above-board, and that Parliament should have the right to discuss it. Here was a Board absolutely proposing to take a balance of £800,000, granted, for mixed education, and apply it to denominational education. That could not be tolerated. He admitted that the system was becoming largely denominational, in so

far as, in all parts of Ireland, there were thousands of schools where the attendance was purely Roman Catholic, or purely Protestant; but if a school was made denominational where the attendance was denominational, men would practically be debarred from going to those districts to earn a livelihood, or could do so only at the cost of having their children educated in a Roman Catholic or a Protestant atmosphere. The State had no manner of right to say that the children should be educated on any such terms. A State school here should be like a State school in America—free and open, without prejudice to the faith or morals of any child in the United Kingdom. Hon. Gentlemen talked about the emblems used being Christian emblems. [Mr. SEXTON: They are used in England.] Take a national school in the South of Ireland with a small Protestant minority: Protestant children had to attend these schools; there were emblems on the wall to which the Catholic children did obeisance. He had seen it, and he knew it; and he said a Protestant's child's life would not be worth living if he did not do the same thing. They were not going to allow a Board meeting in a back-room to subject the Protestant minority to any such thing. He gave the Chief Secretary for Ireland every possible credit for the action he took upon the Chief Baron's resolution. They felt grateful to him for the courage he displayed. There was no question in Ireland that touched the people so quickly as this. He would call the right hon. Gentleman's attention to an article which appeared in an organ of Catholic education after this resolution was passed, which he knew to have been written by an official of the Board. That article said that the Chief Baron had done nobly; that the Commissioners had done well; but that the man who really deserved all the credit, who laid the mine and fired it, was not the Chief Baron, but Archbishop Walsh. The Protestant minority in Ireland had a right to be protected from intrigues of this kind. They were thankful that the veto of the Lord Lieutenant had been between them and the resolution, but he did not think it was too much to ask the House, seeing that it supplied almost the whole of the money, to demand that, if the

*Mr. T. W. Russell*

fundamental principle of the system was to be altered at all, it should have something to say to the alteration. The hon. Gentleman the Member for North Kerry was entirely in error in supposing that he had anything to do with the Bill. It was drawn in his absence. His name was not even on the back of it. [An hon. MEMBER : You inspired it.] He had not even inspired it, but he cordially supported the principle of it. He desired to see the authority of the House thrown over the minorities in the South and West of Ireland. The House was prodigal in its promises to protect minorities in Ireland. Here was a test case, and he put it especially to the Nonconformist conscience to-day. The Government might consider the Bill defective, but the Mover and Seconder had offered to accept any Amendment that would preserve the right of Parliament to stop any fundamental change. He hoped the House would not refuse that offer. The question was one of the most important that could come before the House, and he hoped it would not allow the minority to be sacrificed to a body of men sitting in a back-room in Marlborough Street, in Dublin, who claimed to go behind the back of Parliament.

COLONEL J. P. NOLAN (Galway, N.) said, any new Member would fancy that the back-room alluded to by the hon. Member was inhabited by a body of wicked Home Rulers who wanted to crush education in Ireland. But the fact was the whole of this idea was initiated by the late Chief Secretary for Ireland, whom the hon. Member sedulously followed into the Lobby on almost every Division in which Ireland was concerned. The hon. Member spoke four times of the National Board of Education sitting in a back-room. He gave him his back-room; if necessary they could have a proviso that it should be a front one. The hon. Member for South Tyrone had never fairly stated the case. The fact was that the Conservatives had a very popular Bill in Parliament for freeing education, from which, though it had been suggested largely by the Liberals, they drew, and deserved some credit. It was pointed out to them that this free education would not really apply

to Ireland so long as the Christian Brothers were excluded from the benefit of the public moneys. The Chief Secretary said that could not very well be dealt with in the Free Education Bill; but there was a provision by which the Board of Education in Ireland could so change the rules that the Christian Brothers, emblems and all, would be admitted to the benefits of the Bill. Nationalist Members had stated that they would give way on certain points, but they did not say they would give way on the point of emblems, to which they attached considerable importance, and which were allowed under certain School Boards in England. The Chief Secretary referred to the Board of National Education in Ireland, and it happened, as happened very often in Ireland, that some of them wanted to get a little more out of the promise, so as to procure an additional amount for denominational education. A resolution to that effect was passed by the National Board by a narrow majority, and rejected by the Chief Secretary. He did not say the Chief Secretary was wrong, and did not ask for more than the fulfilment of the promise made to the Christian Brothers. The impression which was left on his mind as to what the late Chief Secretary said was also the impression which was left on the minds of other hon. Members. He could not say that the present Chief Secretary had come up to his expectations, and he did blame the right hon. Gentleman to a certain qualified extent for not having given effect to the last resolution of the National Education Board. That resolution was passed by a majority of very nearly two to one, and its effect would be practically to admit very few except the Christian Brothers under this new rule. What was the Bill they were now discussing? It was simply to destroy what the Chief Secretary promised. The Conservative Party, as represented by the late Government, promised the Irish Members one thing when they thought such a promise might have some effect on the elections; but now that the elections were over they had the Ulster Conservatives coming forward, and not only recognising that the promise had not been redeemed, but actually attempting to pass a Bill to prevent it ever being redeemed at any

time. That he considered to be an unfair use of Party warfare. If they were to have the regular troops in the shape of the Front Opposition Bench promising them one thing, and then to have the Ulster Tories coming forward like a detached body and engaging in a guerilla warfare to prevent that promise being given effect to, it would be a most unfair state of things. He considered that the Conservatives ought to feel themselves bound by the statement of the late Chief Secretary. It had been urged that the members of the National Board of Education were not an elected body. That was true, but still they were elected in one sense, for they were nominated by the Chief Secretary, who, however, before he could exercise such power of nomination, must have been himself elected and returned to Parliament by some constituency. But what did the Bill before the House propose to do? It proposed to leave to a purely non-elected body like the House of Lords the power of granting this money. Surely, if it was an argument against the 20 gentlemen in Dublin that they were not elected, the argument would apply with even greater force to the House of Lords, not one of the Members of which was elected, not one of whom was appointed by a majority of votes, but the preponderating majority of whom were hereditary legislators. The hon. Member had stated that a Protestant child attending a Catholic school would have to make an obeisance at religious pictures. Now, he had never at any time seen any boy kneel or make an obeisance at any picture or statue in any school. Such a thing would be quite exceptional. The Irish were a practical people, and could not, for one thing, spare the time to go down on their knees or make an obeisance every time that they looked at a picture or a statue. If Catholic people were to go down on their knees or make an obeisance every time they saw a picture, say of the Apostles, how could they ever get through a foreign Picture Gallery? Really, there was no such custom. It was admitted that the Christian Brothers gave a sound and non-political education, and because of this superior education Protestant children occasionally went to such schools. The Christian Brothers did not wish for one moment to proselytise any of these Protestant

children; and even if they did, it would be impossible for them to do so. The Christian Brothers were doing excellent work in the cause of education, and they were willing to remove certain of the rules, and make it still better for any of the Protestants who desired to attend such schools. He would point out that in the South and West of Ireland the Protestants had got very considerable endowments; they had the Erasmus Smith and other schools, and were very favourably situated for educational advantages. The Catholics, on the other hand, were rather badly off in this respect. They had got no endowments, and they had nothing except the ordinary National schools, supplemented by the schools of the Christian Brothers. The latter Body, although they imparted a thoroughly good education to the children entrusted to their care, received no assistance whatever from the State beyond a trifle from the Science and Art Department, which was so insignificant that it was not worth counting. Why should the Christian Brothers be thus tabooed? If boys wished to be educated in these schools, why should they not be allowed? The Christian Brothers were willing to submit to any examination; and if the boys could pass these examinations, why should these schools not receive the money to which other schools were entitled? Because it was said a few Protestant boys might attend such schools. But, as he had pointed out, they had already got capital schools of their own, and, in addition, they had got considerable endowments. The Catholics, on the other hand, were without endowments, for they had been taken from them 200 years ago and handed over to the Protestants. It was unfair and unjust to exclude the Christian Brothers from all the benefits which other schools received. As to the Bill before the House, it was an unfair one, and he trusted it would be rejected. He hoped the present Chief Secretary would give effect to the recommendation of the late Chief Secretary, and that in future he would see that schools conducted by the Christian Brothers received the money to which they were as much entitled as any other schools.

MR. CARSON (Dublin University): I do not intend to occupy the time of the House at any great length in going into

this which is for Ireland a very important question. I wish distinctly to make my own position in the matter clear, because I think people may naturally come to an erroneous conclusion unless one is very specific as to the reasons which influence ones votes on the present Bill. Now, Sir, I would just ask the House for one moment to go back to what is the real question involved in the Bill under discussion to-day. For my own part, I do not intend to say one single word for or against denominational education. I am aware that in the constituency which I have the honour to represent there are many of my own religion who are sincere advocates of denominational education in Ireland; and whether there ought to be a system of denominational education pure and simple, or whether there ought not, is a question which I, for my part, do not at all wish to discuss upon the occasion of this Debate. But, Sir, what is the real question before the House? We have had for 60 years in Ireland an Administrative Board of Education—an Administrative Board formed to carry out a system of undenominational education, an Administrative Board solely without any legislative functions whatsoever; and, Sir, it does occur to me to be somewhat of a startling proposition to ask that this House should for one moment sanction that a Board, formed and framed for carrying out a certain system of education sanctioned by this House—is to have power, in what I would call a breach of the trust which they are formed to carry out, to change that system from an undenominational into a denominational system. And all that the present Bill provides is this: that if the Board is to carry out a system of denominational education instead of a system of undenominational, instead of doing that of their own free will they are to come to the House of Commons and ask the House of Commons for its sanction. That seems to me to be the net question, and I would like to ask hon. Members below the Gangway, who are opposed to this Bill, do they think that the present method of sanctioning the rules of the Board is altogether satisfactory? Why, what has occurred? The majority of that Board have come to the conclusion—and I do not say at all improperly—that there ought to be a change in the

system of education in Ireland. That majority was composed, as the Member for North Kerry has said, amongst others, of two eminent Protestant gentlemen, against whom I should be sorry that one single word should be said in this House. And what is the state of the facts? That recommendation is approved of by hon. Members below the Gangway and by a majority of the Board. It is submitted to the Lord Lieutenant and the Chief Secretary, and against the will of hon. Members below the Gangway, and against the will of the majority of the Board, that Resolution is thrown out and not adopted; and I would like to know if hon. Members below the Gangway think that satisfactory. If the present Bill were carried, the whole obligation of approving or disapproving of a fundamental change of that kind would be shifted from the Lord Lieutenant—who might well say, “I will not take upon myself, against the will of the Board and of a large number of the Representatives of the Irish people, to throw out the resolution of the Commissioners; I shall sanction it, and let it then come before the House of Commons, who can at once either affirm or disaffirm the resolution so passed.” That occurs to me to be a method entirely superior to the method that is at present in force, and which absolutely throws it upon the Representatives of the particular Government which is in power for the time being to say whether or no there shall be denominational education in Ireland. I should like just for one moment to call the attention of the House to the particular facts which led to the necessity, as we conceive it, for this particular Bill. During the Debate on the Education Bill towards the end of last Session the question arose as to the demands of the Christian Brothers to the benefit of the education grants granted by this House. Now, I wish distinctly to say that in my own opinion there is not in Ireland a more useful educational system than that pursued by the Christian Brothers; and, so far as I am concerned, I do not for one moment wish it to be supposed that I would oppose any grant to the Christian Brothers for carrying on their very useful system of education. But then let us see if the method in which this is proposed to be carried out is entirely satisfactory, or one which will meet with the



approval of this House. The method by which it was assumed that could be done was by making the clause known as the Conscience Clause applicable to the rules of the Board of National Education in Ireland. That clause, as I would remind the House, prevents any religious instruction being given in a school at variance with the particular religion of any of the pupils present, except at specified times. Now, the whole question in the present instance is as to the meaning of religious instruction, and that is what appears to me to have been left entirely out of consideration in the Debate this afternoon. The Board of Education Commissioners, when this matter came before them, saw at once that making the clause in the Intermediate Education Act applicable to the Education Commissioners would not get over the difficulty; and instead of adjudicating on the matter which was specifically referred to them by my right hon. Friend when he was Chief Secretary for Ireland, they proceeded not merely to make this particular Conscience Clause applicable to the educational system they were carrying out, but they proceeded, for the purpose of bringing in the Christian Brothers, to abrogate certain rules which have been fundamental rules since 1830, when first this Charter was granted to the Education Board. What would be the result of that? It would be this: that you would have a State grant given to schools at which you would have children of all denominations coming in, where you could not prevent the children of a particular denomination receiving what must amount to religious instruction in another religion to which they did not belong; and I say, while there is a great deal to be said in favour of denominational education pure and simple, I think it would be an intolerable system that Protestant children or Catholic children should be allowed to go to schools where they would get what practically amounts to religious education in a religion different to that to which they belong. To show that I am right in saying these emblems amount to religious instruction, let me call the attention of the House to a statement made by the Superior of the Christian Brothers in answer to a letter from the Board asking him whether the Christian

Brothers would agree to forego these religious emblems. He says—

“With regard to the religious emblems in our schools, and which have sometimes excited adverse comment; with reference to this point I wish to say we have had religious emblems in all our schools from the very beginning of the Institute, a period of over 90 years. I could not think of making any change in this time-honoured custom, and I do believe the removal of these emblems from the Christian schools would have the most injurious effect on the religious instincts and the susceptible minds of the children attending these schools, and, to quote the words of a respectable Protestant gentleman in a letter to a newspaper, ‘to do so would be a kind of apostasy.’”

I entirely approve of the Superior of the Christian Brothers adhering to the regulations as regards these emblems. Why should he not? But what I do object to is this: that our Protestant children should, under a system of State-aided education, be compelled to go to a school where they would be met by emblems which, to use the words of the Superior of the Christian Brothers, have an effect on the religious instincts and susceptible minds of the children attending these schools. And, Sir, while I at once admit, as I have said, that there may be a great deal to be said in favour of denominational education pure and simple, when you would have Protestant children at Protestant schools and Catholic children at Catholic schools, I cannot conceive how any Member of this House would sanction a system at which Protestant children would be brought up at a school where these emblems form part of the religious instruction, these emblems having, as the Superior points out, an effect on the religious instincts and susceptible minds of the children attending the schools.

MR. DIAMOND (interposing): Might I point out that in many Catholic schools in this country a large number of Protestant children attend them from choice, and these emblems are in the schools.

MR. CARSON: Whatever a Protestant child might do from choice is one thing; what he may have to do by quasi-compulsion and under a State-aided system of education is entirely another thing. But, Sir, it really occurs to me all this brings us back simply to this: if we had the power of having these rules laid upon the Table of the

House we might make suggestions and put in protective clauses to protect Protestant and Catholic children. And what I cannot see for the life of me is why, if there is to be a grant by the State for these Christian Brothers' schools, Parliament should not say there is to be that right; and if there is not to be a grant sanctioned by Parliament for these Christian Brothers' schools, why should a Board in Dublin, formed for the administration of an entirely different system, have the power which it would be admitted on that argument Parliament would not have sanctioned? A great deal was said by the Member for Kerry as to the opposition of Protestants to this system of denominational education. As I said before, I do not conceive that question is before the House at all. I would like to point out, when it is alleged, as it was in a recent Debate in this House, that the Unionist Members from Ulster do not represent the Protestant or Unionist feeling of Ireland, that we are not merely driven to rely on what the Unionist Members say—though I really think the Unionist Members ought to have the same attention paid to the matters they put forward on behalf of their constituents even as well as hon. Members who are, perhaps, elected in an entirely different way. But, Sir, I would ask, What is the opposition to this system of changing fundamental rules without discussion and without the interference of Parliament? As regards the Episcopalians, the general body of the Synod in Ireland have passed an almost unanimous resolution not against denominational education, but against the framing of these rules behind the back of Parliament and in favour of the present Bill. Lord Justice Fitz Gibbon has been quoted. He is a most eminent man against whom not a word should be said in this House without a protest on my part; but he must not be taken as the only, or even chief, representative of the Episcopalians in this matter. The views of that Body are expressed by the general Synod, which has almost unanimously agreed that the Education Board in Dublin ought not to be allowed to make this fundamental change. The General Assembly of the Presbyterians have passed an exactly similar resolution, and, indeed, have gone further still by declaring against denominational

education altogether. The hon. Member for Kerry has referred to a very distinguished Presbyterian — County Court Judge Shaw. I am not going into the question raised in regard to him; I will only say it is at least ungenerous to take advantage of one's privileges as a Member of this House to attack in this Debate a gentleman so high-minded and high-principled as Mr. Shaw for the purpose of what seemed to be a mere momentary flash in the pan. I think it is a most cowardly system of attack, and one which ought not to be persevered in.

MR. T. M. HEALY (Louth, N.): How about the attack on Justice Mathew?

MR. CARSON: The Methodists as well as the Presbyterians have passed a resolution in favour of this Bill. Is the House, in the face of all these opinions, going now to say that the educational system in Ireland shall be fundamentally changed? No doubt a large body of Catholics are against the Bill, but it is because they do not believe they will ever be able to persuade the House to grant them a denominational system. The hon. Member for Kerry suggested that this was an inopportune time to raise the question when the Home Rule Bill was before the House; but he seems to have forgotten that there is a provision in the Bill specifically put in to protect minorities which would prevent the Irish Legislature from dealing with this matter, even if the Home Rule Bill should become law, which I hope it will not. I do not believe it ever will. But, suppose it passes, Parliament will have enacted that an Irish Legislature shall have no power to deal with the matter, and yet a Board sitting in Dublin will pass a resolution and submit it to the Lord Lieutenant, who, acting on the advice of the Irish Privy Council, will approve it, unless this Bill is passed to prevent such a thing being done. I say nothing as regards denominational education, and I have not a word to utter against the Christian Brothers. All I ask is that, if these fundamental changes are to be made, let us—the Unionists on one side and the Catholics on the other—discuss them before the Imperial Parliament.

LORD R. CHURCHILL (Paddington, S.): The House may be somewhat surprised at seeing two hon. Members

rise from this Bench in immediate succession, so I will at once explain that my remarks will be in diametrical opposition to those of the hon. and learned Gentleman who last spoke, and who, although he gave expression to many liberal sentiments, is unfortunately going to give an illiberal vote. I have often wished that the Tory Party in this House, on these minor Irish questions, would endeavour to study how they can, as far as possible, make concessions which can do no harm whatever to Protestant interests, and can remove grievances under which Roman Catholics sometimes suffer, and indeed bitterly suffer. I have always wished that the Tory Party would give way to what I feel certain is, so far as English sentiment is concerned, their natural tendency; but, unfortunately, from time to time, with some exceptions, they yield to powerful influences which prevent them from giving way. This is a very peculiar case in which Protestants of high authority wish to make a concession. The Bill is an innocent-looking measure on the face of it. Clauses 2, 3, and 4 practically leave the law as it is, and I do not find in them any proposal to make a change in the working of the National Board; but Clause 6 provides that any new rules which may be made by the Board shall be laid before the Houses of Parliament before they become operative in Ireland. That appears to be a very large change to make. The bases of the national system which obtain to-day were laid by the greatest Chief Secretary the Tory Party ever gave to Ireland, the late Lord Derby, when Mr. Stanley; and the Board has conducted the system of national elementary education with perhaps more conspicuous success than has attended any Department entrusted with education in any part of the United Kingdom. I may be wrong, but I cannot help reflecting that in all the difficulties which have attended Irish government, no serious difficulty connected with elementary education has ever arisen. Of late years, under the experience and ability of Sir Patrick Keenan, the head of the National Board, all sources of trouble have been avoided. Irish education has developed and progressed even to a greater degree in some respects than education in this country; and in the

whole career of the National Board, through bad times and through good times—and there have been both—the success of that Board has not only covered them with credit, but is a credit to the people over whose education they preside, for it shows that in educational matters the Irish people seek for tranquillity and peace. It is a great thing thus to administer a Department without troubling either Parliament or the country. What is now proposed? It is proposed in recognition of the services of the Board, particularly of their services under Sir Patrick Keenan, to place their proceedings with regard to the making of rules under the immediate control of Parliament. That seems to me to be a gratuitous slur on the National Board. For the best part of 70 years the National Board has administered this education grant; and now for an object, about which I shall have a word to say presently, it is proposed to place all the proceedings of the National Board in the way of the making of rules under the control of Parliament. The proceedings are, in fact, to be inoperative until sanctioned by Parliament. We could not take a more invidious step, quite apart from any question of Home Rule. It seems absurd to drag in Parliament to look after what are purely Irish matters which have never been brought under the control of Parliament, and to invite either one Party or the other to endeavour, if they see any chance of success, to embarrass the National Board in Ireland. Yet that is what this Bill will do. It seems to some a very grand thing to assert the control of the Imperial Parliament, as if it would give security for religious liberty. But under this Board religious liberty has been most carefully protected, and it will not be endangered by any change which the National Board wish to make. The very object of this Bill is to prevent the great educational institution of the Christian Brothers from sharing in the State grants given for the subvention of education in Ireland. That is the whole object of the Bill; but the Catholic party, assisted, I am glad to say, by one of my greatest friends (Lord Justice FitzGibbon) has at last induced the National Board to consider rules which will obviate the difficulty under which the Christian Brothers have hitherto laboured with regard to getting

assistance from State grants. I hold that if that proposal is carried out, and the rules are adapted to the end in view, no change whatever will be made in the educational system of Ireland. My hon. and learned Friend the Member for Trinity College has stated that a great change will be made. With great respect to my hon. Friend, I will say that he has greatly exaggerated. No change whatever will be made. The system of education in Ireland is nominally a system of mixed secular and separate religious instruction, but such a system has never been carried out. Schools may be produced here and there in which there is a system of mixed education, but all over Ireland the system has been purely denominational. What have the Christian Brothers done to prevent them from deriving any advantage from the State grants? The Christian Brothers, as I have said before, are a very remarkable Body. They educate many thousands of Irish children. They have been working for over half a century in Ireland. There is a great attraction about the Christian Brothers. It happens that I have been connected with a Commission appointed to inquire into the endowed schools in Ireland. The Christian Brothers had some of the endowments which we had to inspect, and I consequently became acquainted with their system. Their peculiar life—so simple, so frugal, so tranquil—attracts not only the young, but the traveller who may happen to be passing by. They have a most wonderful method of teaching, which I should say is superior to the ordinary teaching in Ireland, whether under Catholics or under Protestants. There is a cleanliness, an order, a regularity about their schools which is very remarkable, and what is equally remarkable is their success in winning the affections of the children who go to their schools. Now, that is a general outline of what the Christian Brothers are. The success of their pupils in the intermediate education examinations has, I believe, been most remarkable. They have gained—although they do not profess to give any very high standard of education—both scholarships and prizes in the intermediate examinations. And what is the fault found with the Christian Brothers, who have conferred such great educational benefits on Ireland?

Their fault is that they will not give up—and I think it is greatly to their credit—their religious instruction. They have never been accused of proselytism. What charge is brought against the Christian Brothers in this 19th century—this day of liberality and toleration? That they have, with a tenacity that does them credit, adhered to the practice of decorating their school walls with holy pictures and with images of the Crucifixion and other emblems, not of a sectarian, but of a general religious character. Because they will not give up this habit, this Body, which has educated thousands of Irish children, in the best manner in which Irish children, or any other children, can be educated, have been excluded from the benefit of the State grants. I thought it would have been for the credit of a Tory Government to remove that grievance. Not a single person in Ireland could have been injured by its removal. I had hoped that that would have been done, to the credit of a Tory Government—that they would have made a concession with grace and liberality which would have been welcome to the people of Ireland. They began, but too late, for their tenure of Office was ended. That chance having been gone, I do hope that the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary is not going to throw away his opportunity. It is a grand opportunity, the settling of this old grievance of years. It has nothing to do with Party politics, and I ask the right hon. Gentleman, on the principles of religious toleration, on the ground that the practice of Ireland in the matter of education has been purely denominational, and on the ground of justice to the great public services rendered by a poor community to the Irish people, to come to some agreement with the majority of the National Board of Education to include the Christian Brothers in the participation of the educational grants, and to remove a disability which no British Government, be it Tory or Liberal, ought to allow to continue any longer.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. J. MORLEY, Newcastle-upon-Tyne): Mr. Speaker, in all quarters of the House hon. Members are familiar with the enormous difficulties of this subject, and I am sure in all quarters we are glad to recognise the enlightened

and statesmanlike tone, if I may say so, in which the noble Lord (Lord R. Churchill) has just spoken. As from time to time it has been my duty in this House to be the spokesman of the National Board, I welcome with special gratitude the language he has used in respect of that Board. If the noble Lord had been present during the earlier part of the Debate he would have heard hon. Members below the Gangway admitting that the National Board had gone good work for Ireland, yet using phrases about the Commissioners which are incompatible not only with the recognition of their services but with any respect for their public spirit. I will imitate the hon. and learned Member for Dublin University (Mr. Carson) in declining to discuss the question of denominational or undenominational education. The hon. Member for Tyrone (Mr. T. W. Russell) promised to stand aloof from the question, which is really not germane to the Bill before the House, but he did not keep his promise, and his speech was neither more nor less than an ultra-Protestant tirade against the system of education which, in fact, is now prevailing in Ireland, and the noble Lord did good service in reminding the House that the system of education in Ireland now is not the system founded in 1831—a mixed literary and religious system—but a denominational system. I was brought up to think that the foundation of that system was one of the most hopeful things for the future harmony of all classes in Ireland that an English statesman ever devised, but we know well it has broken down under the stress of Irish National feeling and the instincts of the Irish people which led them to combine religious with secular teaching. The hon. Member for South Tyrone is full of suspicions of the National Board and what it has done since the late Chief Secretary opposite set this controversy going. I cannot forget that no longer back than 1891 the hon. Member for Tyrone taunted the then Irish Secretary with giving a blank cheque to Archbishop Walsh and Archbishop Croke. This shows the preternatural suspicion which resided in the breast of the hon. Member, and which I hope the House will entirely disregard. I have never heard in this House a debate

characterised by more extravagant exaggeration of language. The noble Lord who introduced the Bill said the new rules which had been under the consideration of the National Board and the Executive Government were rules which would have introduced a system that would have kept alive the spirit of religious animosity and religious faction.

LORD F. HAMILTON: I only said that was the fear of the Protestants, not that they would necessarily have had that effect.

MR. J. MORLEY: What the noble Lord said was that the Protestants feared that if the rules in the spirit of the Lord Chief Baron's motion were acted upon, the children would be taught from their cradles to live in a spirit of faction, and would grow up to hate and loathe one another. It has been said that under the present system there is no Parliamentary control, and the justification of the Bill is that it is to enact that control. I cannot imagine a more unreal account of the matter. Look at what has happened in this particular case; and the same thing would happen in any case of a similar kind where a great change of a fundamental rule was proposed. What has happened is that the Executive Government—the Lord Lieutenant and myself—have refused to accept a proposal twice made to us by the National Board. Does any hon. Member suppose—do the promoters of the Bill suppose—this was not done without a full sense of Parliamentary responsibility? I should like to know what state of mind a Chief Secretary would be in if in giving his decision upon a question of this kind he should entirely leave out of sight what the probable opinion of the House of Commons would be? The hon. Member for Dublin University said it was merely a representative of a particular Government who said “aye” or “no” to these fundamental proposals, but the Chief Secretary and Lord Lieutenant of the day, whoever they may be—however representative of a particular Party—are also representatives of a Government which represents a majority in this House, and that represents, in its fullest sense, Parliamentary control. It is indirect, but that is all the better. At all events, it has the great merit of relieving the House of Commons of what this

Bill endeavours to foist and intrude upon it—the minute consideration of all the rules the National Board may have before them. If we had assented to the proposals made last October and in January does anyone dream that our responsibility to the House of Commons would not soon have found us out? Does anyone suppose any Chief Secretary or any Lord Lieutenant deciding a question of this kind does not have the wish of the House of Commons fully before him? He may not have the wish of the House of Lords before him. And here we have one of the worst features of the Bill. It proposes to transfer to a Chamber in which there is not a single representative of that Party in Ireland which sends a majority of Irish Representatives to this House, and submit to the fiat of that non-representative House the passing or rejection of a rule which has been accepted by the National Board, and may be demanded by the needs and sentiment of Ireland. There is a great deal to be said for the practice existing as to the Intermediate Education Act, the Judicature Act, the Land Act, and the English Education Code, which prescribes that the rules under those Acts shall be laid on the Tables of the two Houses. There is a great deal to be said for that as a general principle, and if a good way of applying that could be devised, and a proper occasion could be found, I, for one, should have very little quarrel to begin with with such a proposal; but this Bill is the most unworkable scheme that could have been brought before the House. It is unworkable at every point. I wish hon. Gentlemen who are thinking of voting for the Bill to remember exactly what it is that it prescribes. No new Rule is to come into force until it has been passed by the Commissioners, submitted to the Lord Lieutenant and approved by him, and been placed before a special meeting of the Commissioners in whose office it has rested a month. And then one of the Commissioners—nobody else—must ask the Lord Lieutenant to lay the Rule before Parliament. Occasions constantly arise in the proceedings of the National Board to which the dilatory, cumbrous machinery contained in the Bill would be wholly inapplicable. And however much it may be desired, the Rule may be

blocked by one Commissioner petitioning against it. The Bill is unworkable, and even if less unworkable than it is, I should object to it on the present occasion. Why is this Bill introduced now? There is no practical grievance, because the proposals of which you are so bitterly afraid have, under the existing rules, not received the necessary sanction of the Irish Government. This Bill has not sprung from any reasonable or well-founded apprehension of a practical grievance. It has been introduced, as every speech made to-day shows, to put a slight and affront on the National Board for doing what they have every right to do, what they were fully justified in doing, and what they were invited by the late Chief Secretary to do. It is quite true, as the Member for the University of Dublin says, that the proposal went beyond the reference of the right hon. Gentleman's letter of the 11th August. But that letter was an invitation to attain a certain end—namely, the inclusion of the Christian Brothers. That was a laudable object; and it was a certain method of attaining that end that he invited the Commissioners to consider. The Commissioners saw at once that the acceptance of the Intermediate Education Conscience Clause would not attain the end in view. It was, therefore, no trespass or going beyond the fair significance of the reference for them to cast about to find a rule which would attain the end the right hon. Gentleman had held out to them. They made this proposal accordingly. I am afraid this Bill is not only meant to put a slight on the Board, but to be a rebuff to all the school managers in Ireland of a certain religious community by politicians who use the, no doubt sincere, apprehensions of another religious community for the purpose of a Party assault. The names on the back of the Bill show the quarter from which it comes and the motives that inspire it. The speeches made on the other side show exactly the same thing. For my own part, I am quite ready to consider modifications of the present system; but I will not consider them in connection with a bad and unworkable Bill like this, and I will not consider them on an occasion of this kind. Something has been said as to the character of the Board—much has been said

on that head. It has been pointed out that there is no unanimity on the Board. That is quite true; but what does it show? It does not show what the hon. Gentleman the Member for South Tyrone endeavoured to deduce from it, that if you had a Legislative Chamber of Catholics you would necessarily have an ultra denominational code. I see no reason to apprehend anything, so far as my experience of the Board has gone. Quite the contrary. The authority of the Board is due to the fact that it represents all shades of religious communions in Ireland. It does not represent them perfectly or directly, and they are removable by the Lord Lieutenant if he thinks fit. The confidence felt in the Board is shown by the reception which its working constantly meets with by its dealing with what, next to the Land Question, is the most difficult of all Irish subjects, by the success with which it has avoided friction and conducted its work in Ireland. I know the Board has its critics; and that some of them are very severe, but this House will judge it by the Board's achievements, and I do not think anything that has happened this winter need shake the confidence of this House in that Body. Everybody knows that the Board enjoys full consideration on the part of both Protestant and Roman Catholics, and that it secures agreement amongst Presbyterians, Unitarians, and Methodists alike. I think that a Body like the National Board is a hundred times more valuable as an administrative machine than a mere Department of the Government; it is more elastic and more useful, because it contains men of various opinions who are responsible to those who share their opinions. That is the reason why on both occasions I have felt it my duty to advise the Lord Lieutenant to send back for further consideration the proposal made by the Board. I entirely concur in what has been said, both by the hon. and learned Gentleman and the noble Lord, in favour of having as many primary schools as possible brought within the scope of the National Board. Though I cannot respond to the appeal that has been made to me, I can certainly say that if in the interval between now and January, 1894, when the compulsory Education Act comes into force, the Board hammers at—and if I were a member of the

*Mr. J. Morley*

Board I would not despair of hammering at—proposals which are not open to the objections which can be urged against those now submitted to us, I am certain there will be no difficulty in meeting that which all Parties in the House admit to be a claim it is desirable to have met. In the meantime, I, for one, shall vote against a Bill which, if carried, would impose new burdens upon this House, which would give new and illegitimate power to another House, and which, of all things, would tend in the direction of that centralization which gentlemen of all Parties—Liberal Unionists and Conservatives, as well as ourselves—desire to moderate, and some of us wish to bring to an end.

\***MR. JACKSON (Leeds, N.)**: In the two or three minutes that are left to me, I should like to say that I do not understand that my hon. Friends in bringing forward this Bill desire to cast any slight upon the Education Board. I am quite prepared to endorse everything the right hon. Gentleman opposite has said as regards the administration of the Board in England. They have done a great work in the cause of education, and I think they have done that work extremely well. I did not understand that the hon. Member for South Tyrone (Mr. T. W. Russell) said a single word with regard to the Board's past administration, or that that was at all the question that was raised by the Bill. Nor did I understand that any charge or complaint was made against the conduct of the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary himself. On the contrary, his conduct in this matter has been spoken of in terms of approval by my hon. Friends. If I may say so, the only complaint made against the right hon. Gentleman was that made by the noble Lord (Lord Randolph Churchill), that he has not gone further than he has done and accepted the new rule instead of rejecting it. With regard to the admission to the benefits of the grant of all primary schools in Ireland, it was my duty on a former occasion to express the views of the then Government on that subject. I said distinctly that they thought there could be no exception made especially in favour of the Christian Brothers' Schools, and that any rule or

alteration that was made must apply to all schools alike, and not give any exceptional advantage to any one. I admit that those who were charged with the responsibility of administering the Government of Ireland desired to find some plan by which the Christian Brothers and other schools could bring themselves in connection with the Department. As far as I was concerned I was quite prepared to do what I could, in accordance with the rules and regulations of the Board and without departing from the fundamental principle of the rules, to build a bridge by which the Christian Brothers' Schools and all other schools might be brought under the grant. To return to the Bill. I understand the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. J. Morley) does not take up the position that no change ought to be made. I would point out that one of my hon. Friends in charge of the Bill said he did not tie himself to a particular clause, and that he was willing to accept Amendments that would bring it into a form that might suit other hon. Members. As I understand him, the broad principle he contends for is that, before any rule is passed altering the fundamental conditions of the administration of the National Board's education, there should be some publication of it, so that Members of this House might have an opportunity if they desired of bringing the subject before this House. I do not think the right hon. Gentleman would go so far as to say that he would object to such a plan as that being adopted, and I may point out that the hon. Member for Kerry (Mr. Sexton) himself took up that line.

Mr. T. M. HEALY rose in his place, and claimed to move, "That the Question be now put;" but Mr. SPEAKER withheld his assent, as it appeared to him that the House was prepared to come to an immediate decision.

Question put.

The House divided:—Ayes 166; Noes 247.—(Division List, No. 16.)

Words added.

Main Question, as amended, put, and agreed to.

Second Reading put off for six months.

# REFORMATORY SCHOOLS (SCOTLAND) BILL.—(No. 202.)

SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

\*MR. A. C. CORBETT (Glasgow, Tradeston): I beg to move the Second Reading of this Bill. It has the approval of the present Home Secretary and the late Home Secretary, and is unanimously approved by all sections of the Scotch people. Its object is to prevent magistrates from being compelled to commit boys and girls to prison prior to sending them to reformatories.

An hon. MEMBER: I object.

Second Reading deferred till Monday next.

## BARBED WIRE FENCES BILL.—(No. 176.)

COMMITTEE.

Bill considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Clause 1.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Chairman do report Progress, and ask leave to sit again."—(Mr. A. C. Morton.)

SIR M. HICKS-BEACH (Bristol, W.): I understand that the President of the Local Government Board has Amendments to propose to this Bill, and it requires amendment if it is to work properly. May I ask when he will place his Amendments on the Paper?

\*THE PRESIDENT OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. H. H. FOWLER, Wolverhampton, E.): The Motion to report Progress has been made in accordance with an arrangement with my hon. Friend that I should have an opportunity of considering the Bill.

\*SIR CHARLES DILKE (Gloucester, Forest of Dean): Would it not be better to deal with barbed wire as a public nuisance under the Public Health Act? The measure as it stands is a direct incentive to riot, as it empowers any one to abate a nuisance.

SIR M. HICKS-BEACH: It ought to be "any public authority."

MR. T. M. HEALY (Louth, N.): The Bill, as it is framed, does not extend to Ireland.

An hon. MEMBER: Oh, yes it does.



MR. T. M. HEALY : The penalties are those provided for under an English Act which does not apply to Ireland. I would, therefore, ask the Government so to frame their Amendments as to capture our country.

Motion agreed to.

Committee report Progress; to sit again upon Monday next.

#### POLICE ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

(No. 105.)

##### COMMITTEE.

Bill considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

On the Motion of Mr. H. GLADSTONE, the following New Clauses were agreed to :—

Constables employed by the Police Authorities on fire duty to be deemed to be engaged on police duty.

Borough Police may be employed as fire brigade.

Saving powers of Secretary of State.

Amendment of local Acts.

Bill reported; as amended, to be considered To-morrow.

#### DAY INDUSTRIAL SCHOOLS (SCOTLAND) BILL.—(No. 158.)

Read a second time, and committed for Monday next.

### MOTIONS.

#### SANITARY REGISTRATION BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Martin, Bill for the sanitary registration of dwelling houses, schools, colleges, hospitals, asylums, workhouses, factories, workshops, hotels, lodging houses, and other buildings within the United Kingdom, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Martin Sir Algernon Borthwick, Dr. Cameron, Dr. Farquharson, and Mr. Wootton Isaacson.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 240.]

#### ELEMENTARY EDUCATION (SCHOOL ATTENDANCE) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Arthur Acland, Bill to amend the Elementary Education Acts with respect to the age for Attendance at School, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Arthur Acland, Mr. Secretary Asquith, and Mr. Mundella.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 241.]

#### PUBLIC LIBRARIES (IRELAND) ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Field, Bill to amend the Public Libraries (Ireland) Act, ordered to be

brought in by Mr. Field, Colonel Nolan, Mr. John Redmond, and Mr. Clancy.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 242.]

#### CIVIL SERVICES (EAST INDIA) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Naoroji, Bill to provide for the simultaneous holding in India and the United Kingdom of the first examinations for appointments to the Civil Services of India, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Naoroji, Mr. Schwann, Mr. Caine, and Mr. Birkmyre.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 243.]

#### PAYMENT OF MEMBERS.

Address for, "Return showing, with respect to the Colonies of Great Britain, the United States of America, and the Countries of Europe, whether Payment of Members of the Legislature obtains, the amounts or scale of such Payment, and whether it includes, or whether there is in addition thereto, any allowance for travelling expenses, or the privilege of free passes on the Railways of these Countries."—(*Mr. Conybeare.*)

#### PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES.

Ordered, That a Select Committee be appointed to inquire and report as to the cost and method of the publication of the Debates and Proceedings in Parliament.

The Committee was accordingly nominated of Mr. Anstruther, Mr. Bartley, Mr. Gibson Bowles, Mr. Causton, Mr. Dalziel, Sir John Gorst, Sir John Hibbert, Sir Henry Howorth, Mr. Morton, Mr. T. P. O'Connor, and Mr. Willox.

Ordered, That the Committee have power to send for persons, papers, and records.

Ordered, That Five be the quorum.—(*Mr. Marjoribanks.*)

#### RAILWAY AND CANAL TRAFFIC BILL. (No. 171.)

Order for Second Reading upon Wednesday, 26th April, read, and discharged.

Bill withdrawn.

#### RAILWAY AND CANAL RATES AND CHARGES BILL.—(No. 41.)

Order for Second Reading upon Wednesday, 31st May, read, and discharged.

Bill withdrawn.

#### RAILWAY RATES AND CHARGES BILL. (No. 36.)

Order for Second Reading upon Wednesday, 12th April, read, and discharged.

Bill withdrawn.

It being Six of the clock, Mr. SPEAKER adjourned the House without Question put till To-morrow.

## HOUSE OF LORDS,

*Thursday, 2nd March 1893.*

Several Lords—took the Oath.

SAT FIRST.

The Lord Teynham, after the death of his father.

## TRADE UNION PROVIDENT FUNDS

BILL.—(No. 21.)

SECOND READING.

Order of the Day for the Second Reading, read.

THE LORD CHANCELLOR (Lord HERSCHELL): My Lords, this is a measure of a very simple character. It has been passed by the other House, and approved there by the Government. Its object is simply to protect the funds of certain Trade and Provident Societies, so that they shall stand in practically the same position as the funds of Trade Societies which are now exempt from Income Tax, so that the interest on funds, which are used mostly for providing old-age pensions, and altogether for provident purposes by way of superannuation and otherwise, shall be exempt in future from Income Tax. That is the whole scope and object of the Bill, and I beg to move that it be now read a second time.

Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2<sup>a</sup>."—(*The Lord Herschell.*)

Motion agreed to; Bill read 2<sup>a</sup> accordingly, and committed to a Committee of the Whole House on Monday next.

## PUBLIC AUTHORITIES PROTECTION

BILL [H.L.].—(No. 6.)

Read 3<sup>a</sup> (according to order), and passed, and sent to the Commons.

## AUTHORISED COMPANIES LIQUOR BILL

[H.L.]

BILL PRESENTED. FIRST READING.

\*THE BISHOP OF CHESTER, in presenting a Bill for establishing a system of retail sale of intoxicating liquor by an authorised company, said it had been

thought desirable he should make a somewhat fuller statement than was usual—first, of the background of evidence and reason upon which the Bill rested; and, secondly, of its provisions. The Bill might best be regarded as an attempt to carry out the first recommendation of the Special Committee of that House which sat in 1878 and reported in 1879 upon the subject of intemperance. That recommendation was that legal facilities should be given for the local adoption of the Gothenburg and Mr. Chamberlain's schemes, or of some modification of those schemes. He would remind their Lordships of the composition of that Committee. The Duke of Westminster was the Chairman, and on the very rare occasions when he was not present his place was taken by Lord Aberdare, whose hand was also manifest in the drafting of the Report, and certainly in that part of it which dealt with the subject-matter under consideration. He was privileged to say that both noble Lords were among the leading authors of the Bill which he had the honour to present. The time which had elapsed between their first essays in this matter and the production of the present Bill exactly corresponded with that which elapsed between Sir W. Scott's first essay in romantic composition in prose and the publication of *Waverley*. Their Lordships would, he was sure, hail that as an omen. On that Committee were also Lords Morley, Kimberley, and Onslow, and the present Bishop of London, then Bishop of Exeter, the late Archbishops Tait, Thomson, and Magee, and the late Bishop of Carlisle. The Committee was eminently a strong one. It had the advantage of the best evidence available, and amongst others Mr. Chamberlain, then fresh from the study of the Gothenburg system in Sweden, and with a united and resolute Birmingham at his back, gave evidence. Birmingham at that time had resolved to adopt the system of municipal licensing in the Town Council by a majority of 46 against 10, and by the Board of Guardians unanimously. There were thus 120 gentlemen, representing 400,000 people, determined to carry out this system should legal facilities be given. He would pause for a moment to dwell upon the melancholy subject of lost opportunities in temperance reform in connection with

the Report of the Lords' Committee of 1879. Had Mr. Bruce's Bill of 1871 been carried, it was calculated that, instead of our having 128,000 public-houses, we should now have less than 40,000; and had Birmingham received the legal facilities which it desired for making an experiment in municipal licensing and municipal socialism, it would have disposed of the whole temperance problem. The need was now as sore as ever. Intemperance and its offspring—pauperism, crime, insanity, and boundless expenditure—were amongst us as fiercely as ever. Although the evils of intemperance met laymen at every point—in public, in the streets, the Courts of Law, and in our asylums—yet he ventured to say that the ministers of religion felt its sorrow and its consequences more keenly because they came face to face with it in the people's homes. He was not going to speak about the Drink Bill, as it was called, of the country in any exaggerated language, but it was a fact of which it was hardly possible to over-rate the significance, for it was estimated that nearly one-eighth of the wages of the working classes was spent upon alcoholic drink. Surely, therefore, there was some room for reform and for a redistribution of that large expenditure. People spoke, and rightly, of the need of a Department of Labour, but we needed almost more a Department of Leisure. The entertainment of the people question was, he thought, one of the most important of the day. Again, who could deny that it was a matter of vital importance if it were possible, and surely it was possible to a great extent, to eliminate the influence of liquor from our political system? Beer in politics was altogether unlovely; and even Anti-beer was not always seen at its best. Those who had any close experience of the working of our electoral system must allow that anything which would diminish the influence of the licensed victuallers and of the counter-interest in connection with our political system was to be encouraged. Again, the growth of tied houses and of tippling houses was another reason why legislation should interpose. That system was of comparatively modern creation, and we hardly realised how powerful the influence of tied houses was over the retail trade of the country even in the country districts.

*The Bishop of Chester*

Taking the rural districts of Cheshire no less than 868 were tied houses out of 1,629, and he believed the proportion was larger in some of our great cities—as large as eight out of ten. That was surely not what the Legislature contemplated or intended. There might be something to be said for the tied houses system if some of the other wholesale traders had also an influence over the retail trade; but, whereas in licensed victualling all forms of refreshment should be represented and cultivated, it was beer and spirits that dominated the retail trade, and the consequence was, among other undesirable results, that in a large number of houses no refreshment but beer and spirits could be found. In rural Cheshire, he believed, a large proportion of houses, over 700, at the present time sold nothing but drink. As the need was sore, the remedy was well-established, and appealed to us more strongly than it did in 1879. As to the history of temperance reform in Sweden, the Gothenburg system came into existence in 1866. The name was, to a certain extent, a misnomer, because, although the system was first applied in Gothenburg, it was not invented there, and was certainly not brought to perfection in that place. In the early part of this century—for the first 60 years—Scandinavia was notable for its drunkenness. It was spoken of as the most drunken country in Europe, and that was due largely to the system of free and uncontrolled distilling of the native brandy, which was, and still is, to a great extent, the popular drink of the working classes in Sweden and Norway. In 1811 nearly every corn-grower was practically a distiller. In 1830 170,000 stills were at work in Sweden, and they had been reduced by legislation to 40,000 in 1850; and the temperance sentiment of the country was rapidly growing. In 1855 a very important Act was passed for local option; and it was a local option which gave (as local option should give) three alternatives to the people: It allowed them to reduce the number of public-houses almost, if not quite, to zero; it allowed them to leave the existing system of private licences, cut down and controlled, but still in existence, and holding the land to a very great extent, especially the towns of Sweden; and it also provided, as early as 1855, for the establish-

ment of what would be called by this Bill an authorised company. This legislation of 1855 did a great deal of good, especially in the country districts. In the towns, however, its operation was less successful, and the fact of the public-houses being so largely swept away in country places drove those who were determined to have drink into the towns. That difficulty from denuding the country districts of public-houses had been felt in Sweden and Norway. For a long time the systems of Sweden and Norway did not touch beer, which was looked upon as a temperance drink; beer and wine were left outside the operation of the controlling societies. But in the towns things got worse, and in 1866 the magistracy, in combination with the Town Council of Gothenburg, determined to adopt what we now call the Gothenburg system. The outward form of this system was a very simple one. It was a Limited Liability Company, pledging itself to work for the public, under the auspices and control of the public, devoting all surplus profits after the payment of a moderate interest, to the public welfare; and thus, in the most real sense, they had a public-house system from beginning to end. That was the outward framework of the Gothenburg system. What was its inward soul and spirit? It was the introduction of a new motive; and surely this was what they wished to bring to bear on our own system of refreshment for the people. The private purpose was dislodged, and zeal for the public good, operating under careful restrictions, was put in its place. Their Lordships were familiar with the advantages of a public system in connection with education. They all knew that a public school system of education was preferred—and rightly so—to a private system of education. Was it safer to leave this peculiarly perplexing and trying subject of the supply of alcohol to private arrangement, which must be continually gravitating towards private profit? In Norway and Sweden the people had thought it right to apply what was nothing less than voluntary socialism in the treatment of this well-known difficulty. He would illustrate his meaning by reading a very significant passage from a speech delivered by Mr. Gladstone on May 15, 1890, in which

the right hon. Gentleman laid his finger on the centre of the difficulty. Speaking on the Local Taxation (Customs and Excise Duties) Bill, Mr. Gladstone said—

“At the present, as I understand it, the case of the Government is that the number of public-houses is enormous. Yes, Sir, but something else ought to be taken into consideration. Why is it that the position of the public-houses in this country of ours is lower than it is in any country in Europe? That is the result of the management we have followed, and the number does not in the slightest degree tend to mitigate that statement. I am one of those who see the utmost, incurable, radical, and profound mischief from what is called the publican's monopoly, and not through any fault of the publican, or, indeed, of anyone. My firm belief is, that as the monopoly connected with private interests belongs to the trade, you will never have true and efficient police supervision exercised over the public-houses, and without that they must continue to hold the disparaged and unsatisfactory position which they do hold now, and have held for many generations.”

This, he thought, touched the root of the evil of the present system; and as long as they contented themselves with merely reducing the number of public-houses, he could not but think that they should be leaving the sting in the wound. The statistics, as far as they showed anything, bearing on the influence of the number of public-houses on the temperance or intemperance of a district, were curiously conflicting. Most persons believed that a reduction in the number of public-houses was an altogether desirable thing; but he pleaded that a further step must be taken; and when they had reduced the number of public-houses, they must endeavour to see that the houses were worked for the public benefit and not for private profit, co-operating with this mysterious craving for alcohol which was so common. Gothenburg had to deal with serious difficulties in the early years of the movement, such as high wages, the difficulties of compensation, and “The Brandy League,” led by the Brandy King Lars Olsson Smith. But, in spite of all, the Gothenburg movement won its way, because it had the temperance sentiment of the country at its back, and because it was based on sound principles. The system rapidly extended throughout Sweden. In 1879 it had been adopted by every town but one (that was 27) of over 5,000 inhabitants, including Stockholm, which had 250,000 people, and by

19 towns with under 5,000 population. Norway was looking on; and it was surely a strong point in favour of this system that Norway, which did not always view too favourably the lead of Sweden, having appointed a Commission to examine this question, adopted the system with one important difference—namely, that the surplus profits should be applied to objects not connected with the rates, in order to remove all suspicion of the trade being fostered to assist the rates—Norway adopted the system, and it ran rapidly through nearly all towns with Licensing Authorities. There were not similar facilities for its adoption in the country districts. A short summary of the results was given by Mr. T. M. Wilson, a civil engineer, resident in Norway for 36 years, a gentleman intimately acquainted with the language of the country, and who, though starting 20 years ago as an opponent of the Gothenburg system, was now a convinced supporter of it, and one of its ablest champions. When the Earl of Meath visited Bergen not long ago he was struck with the admirable results of the system there, and he gave testimony in *The Nineteenth Century* to the value of Mr. Wilson's opinion, and a summary of the evidence given in his book on Local Option in Norway. This was a summary of what Mr. Wilson recently wrote to *The Scotsman*—

“Control was introduced into Norway in 1871. Since then, practically every town that could form a controlling society has done so, and there are now 51 controlling societies. Population has increased 14½ per cent. Consumption of spirituous drinks has decreased 45 per cent. Crime has decreased 16 per cent. Poor's relief per head of family, or individual not member of a family, has decreased 15 per cent. The number of depositors in Savings Banks has increased 145 per cent. The value of their deposits has increased 100 per cent. The number of Total Abstinence Societies and branches has increased from 30 to 801. The adherents of Total Abstinence Societies have increased from 3,000 to over 100,000. The number of persons able to pay Income Tax and thereby acquire the Parliamentary franchise at the last General Election—two years ago—was just about doubled.”

He might add that Mr. Wilson had recently obtained 117 opinions from officials in Norway on the effects of the system, and of these 111 were favourable, three doubtful, and three adverse. There were other testimonies. First of all, there was the Report conveyed by Sir F.

*The Bishop of Chester*

Plunkett, Her Majesty's Ambassador at Stockholm, in October, 1890. That Report was eminently favourable. It spoke not merely of statistical reductions in the amount of spirits consumed, the number of cases of *delirium tremens*, and the number of arrests for drunkenness, but it showed that the opinions of the Consuls at Stockholm and Gothenburg, with those of 22 Vice Consuls and the Chief of Police at Stockholm, an eminent authority, were, without exception, favourable. Mr. Brooks, a well-known American, who was formerly Professor of Economics at Harvard, and who for the past five years had been studying social problems in Europe, had lately inquired into the working of the Gothenburg system in Sweden and Norway, and he had concluded an article on the subject in the *Forum* by recommending it for adoption in America. In this article, too, Mr. Brooks quoted from a letter he had received from Dr. Gould, the expert of the Labour Department of the United States, who had also studied the system in operation in Sweden and Norway, and in that letter Dr. Gould stated that there was an almost unanimous opinion among all classes that the Gothenburg system, as compared with the old one, was an amazing improvement. “This,” he adds, “is my opinion without qualification.” Dr. Baer, of Berlin, had made a careful comparison of the state of drunkenness in 14 countries, and he found that the improvement in Sweden and Norway, traditionally given to drink as almost no other people, had been unequalled in any other country. Doubtless there were defects in the system. But very much misunderstanding was caused by the difficulties which sprung from unexplained and incomplete statistics, especially when the statistics related to and were compared with different countries which had different laws and usages. For instance, pauperism was reckoned in a different way in Sweden and Norway from other countries, and statistics on this point were very misleading. But the main difficulty in reference to the system in operation in Sweden and Norway was that beer was not placed under control. When the system was first introduced the drink of the labouring classes was chiefly strong native brandy,

but since then the consumption of beer had become more popular, and had increased annually from 35,000,000 litres in 1887 to 59,000,000 in 1891. It was consequently the general opinion that unless the use of beer was also brought under control the wall which had been erected in those countries against intemperance by the Gothenburg system would be broken down. One of the principal lessons to be learned from the experience of Scandinavia in this matter was that control, if it was to be thoroughly effective, must be made as complete as possible. The system was spreading. In 1887 Switzerland, after a careful inquiry, established a Federal monopoly for the wholesale trade in the higher classes of spirits, and the Reports received at the Foreign Office bore testimony to the success of the policy, for it had been attended by financial success, great care and precaution against adulteration, and a remarkable reduction in the amount of spirits consumed, though he was bound to say this, perhaps, might be discounted to some extent by the surreptitious dealings of various kinds which might have been going on. But the total result had undoubtedly been satisfactory. The profits derived from the wholesale trade in the higher classes of spirits in Switzerland were divided among the cantons on the understanding that 10 per cent. were devoted to combating the evils of alcoholism, and great care was taken that this condition was carried out. In 1889 the City of Basle adopted the principle in regard to the retail trade. To some extent the principle had been adopted in this country in isolated instances. For example, it had been applied by Lord Wantage on his own property, and clergymen in Sussex and Warwickshire had worked village public-houses on this plan; but the principal instance was supplied by our own Army. The Gothenburg principle had been applied practically to the Army by the development of the regimental and garrison institute system, with its many social and moral advantages to the soldier. Under the term "regimental and garrison institutes" were embraced, under one management, what existed previously, since about 1865 and up to 1882, under the names of regimental canteen and grocery shop, recreation

room, and library. In every barrack there were rooms set apart for the "regimental institute," which represented what in civil life was called a club. Its object was to supply the soldier with almost everything he might require at moderate prices, and to provide for his recreation and amusement. The institute was divided into two branches: first, the refreshment department, including the canteen for beer, the coffee-room for light refreshment, and the shop at which groceries and other articles can be purchased; second, the recreation department, which embraces reading-rooms (sometimes with billiard tables attached), libraries, skittle alleys, shooting galleries, theatre, &c. The institute was under the direct supervision and management of a committee of officers appointed by the commanding officer. Mr. Childers had, in fact, described the regimental institute as "a well-conducted beer-shop," and under this system the funds raised by the profits derived from the canteen were applied in aid of other branches of the institute, and also in the support of games and sports and other objects of approved utility for the men at large. General Goodenough had stated—

"The Army, in fact, without knowing it, has been for nearly 30 years in the enjoyment of what, it is believed, is best known to the public as the Gothenburg system, under which the profits by the sale of liquor are employed, under careful supervision, for the good of the community. There is hardly any detachment station, however small, where the officers do not manage to establish a canteen for the men, usually as a branch from the parent institution."

The system had also been introduced into the Regimental Regulations of the Army in India; and Sir George Chesney, after describing the growth of the system and various improvements that had been introduced into the Army in previous years, went on to say—

"A still further improvement has been that due to the initiation and persistent energy of the present Commander-in-Chief, Lord Roberts, by which all these recreation rooms have been brought together as one collective institution—the Regimental Institute. This, in fact, is now a comfortable, well-ordered club, managed by a regimental committee, of course, like everything else, under the orders of the commanding officer. The equipment of the institute comprises a theatre, the *parterre* of which is used ordinarily for fencing, single-stick, &c., with a stage at one end for concerts and theatrical performances; a library and reading-room, a

billiard-room, and a refreshment-room, with co-operative store attached, in charge of a non-commissioned officer. The supplies from this are issued at a little above cost price, the profits going to the institute funds. Coffee, tea, aerated waters (made on the premises), and malt liquor are issued at the bar. The institute also contains a separate room for total abstainers, and a room for prayer meetings. The Army Temperance Society in India does very active work. It receives a considerable annual grant from the Government, and handsome subscriptions from the officers of the Army in India to supplement the funds derived from the subscriptions of its members, who, to the best of my recollection, now number about 15 per cent. of the British Army in India, and are steadily increasing. But the marked improvement in the temperance of the Army in India, among those who are not total abstainers, must be ascribed to the humanising influence of the new institutes."

Total abstainers in the Army were increasing year by year, and this was very satisfactory, remembering that most of the crime committed in the Army was due to the evils of drink. Clearly, in the Army we had the proposed system at work among ourselves. Of course, it could not be perfect, because outside the soldiers' quarters there were the unreformed public-houses carrying on an unwholesome competition. No one could say that, if the outside houses were also reformed, it would not be better for both soldier and civilian. Looking at the cumulative effect of the evidence, and making full allowance for possible discount, it afforded very favourable testimony to the success of the system, and there was much stronger reason now than there was in 1879 for giving legal facilities for the adoption of the Gothenburg system, or of some modification of it. Passing on to speak of the Bill itself, if the Bill passed it would be known as the Authorised Companies Act—a title due, with very much besides, to the skill and kindness of Lord Thring. The Act would be adopted on the vote of a simple majority of those enjoying the Local Government franchise, which would include women. A system which took away public-houses might require a two-thirds majority, but for a system which simply substituted one set of public-houses for another and better, a simple majority would be enough. Ten voters would be able to demand a *plébiscite*, which would be taken in boroughs or in wards of boroughs, or in groups of parishes arranged by the County Councils, while there would be special arrangements for London. Any

10 persons qualified to vote might form a company whose Articles of Association would have to be approved by the Board of Trade, and one-third of the Directors must belong to or be nominated by the Local Authority, which would also appoint one of the two auditors. The business would be conducted in the full light of publicity, and would be open to the fullest criticism, which was not true of ordinary public-houses. In more senses than one the existing houses were not really public-houses at all; but under this system, from its very framework and conditions, the whole matter must be public from beginning to end. The next point to which he invited their Lordships' attention were the terms upon which the licensed victuallers already in possession were to be removed. Existing licensed victuallers were entitled to equitable consideration, and it would be a grievous injustice that they should be evicted without equitable compensation and consideration. As far as could be judged, the country had made up its mind that there should be no compensation out of rates or taxes; but still there was room for something in the shape of equitable consideration. There had been such long possession and such reasonable expectation underlying the possession of property on which duties were levied that surely we were not offering too liberal terms if we named a five years' limit, which would practically be six, before which licences would not be disturbed; and during this interval there would be compulsory powers on both sides to buy out, or insist on being bought out, by arbitration. Many of the better class of publicans would be re-employed by the company to conduct the reformed houses under conditions which would be much more wholesome for themselves and their families. The brewers who at present dominated the tied houses, would still have their wholesale trade to fall back upon. A very marked difference existed between the position of the wholesale trader and that of the *bonâ fide* publican who was earning his livelihood in the retail trade, and who, if well-conducted, deserved all consideration at the hands of the public and of an authorised company which would be the minister and servant of the public. After the expiration of five years there would be a reduction of

licences to the maximum proportions of 1 to 1,000 inhabitants in towns and 1 to 600 in the country. All licences issued by Justices would be included so as to make the control as complete as possible, because it was obvious that if one set of public-houses was to be more strictly or more laxly conducted than another the result must be unfavourable. Too many private clubs were merely drinking clubs, and an endeavour would be made to bring them within the scope of the Bill by registration. Passing on to speak briefly of the financial arrangements, the company's interest would be limited to 5 per cent. on the capital, and the surplus profits, after one-third had been transferred to the reserve fund, would be applied to some public object or objects not directly met by rates, such as open spaces, public libraries and museums, hospitals, and the provision of old age pensions, or other purposes of a public and charitable nature. The reserve fund would be a security not only to the company itself, but also to the public in the event of anything going wrong with the company. There would be guarantees against the improper inclusion as Directors or Shareholders of any interested or unsuitable persons. The objects of the company were set out in a specimen Memorandum of Association followed by Articles of Association which would have to be submitted to and approved by the Board of Trade. The third paragraph of the Memorandum of Association was as follows :—

“To establish, either in connection with or separate from premises used by them for the purpose of their business, tea or coffee houses, reading rooms, libraries, newspaper rooms, working men's waiting rooms, or any other convenience for the amusement, recreation, or instruction of the customers of the company.”

It would be agreed that while it was desirable provision should be made for those who took alcohol, it was certainly no less important that sufficient provision should be made for those who wished to keep altogether clear of it. The entertainment of the people should rest on a dual basis, and accordingly one object of these companies would be not only to provide well-conducted public-houses in which alcohol was sold under due restrictions, but also to encourage, directly and indirectly, the establishment

of temperance *cafés* conducted on the best method. It was wished to establish places of entertainment which could be used by women and children, places which could be used with safety by those who knew their weakness when tempted to drink, and places in which clubs and societies could hold their meetings free from the temptation to which their members were exposed at public-houses. He hoped that, if the system was adopted, it would work on both lines, though, of course, the Bill must have in view primarily, if not entirely, the establishment of public-houses in the ordinary sense of the term. The arrangements with regard to management would secure that the managers should have their interest based upon the sale of food and non-alcoholic beverages ; they would be partly paid by a fixed salary and partly by a bonus upon the sale of those refreshments, which, under the present system, were so sorely apt to go to the wall. No credit would be given, special rules would be made about the service, or rather non-service, of children and young people, special inspectors would be appointed, and careful precautions taken against adulteration. Those were social details which others, whose judgment was better than his own, had thought it undesirable should be introduced into the Bill itself ; but he thought it well that the public, who might not very easily make out the true drift and meaning of a Parliamentary Bill, should know that those details would be provided for in the Memorandum and Articles of Association. The Bill would appeal to temperance reformers of all classes, even to the most thorough-going teetotalers, and he might say that it would appeal even to the publicans themselves to some extent, for the treatment contemplated for them was more liberal than might be obtained in other quarters. And the Bill was one which would readily co-operate with other Bills. He could not speak as one who believed in prohibition, but, supposing that the option of prohibition was given, this Bill would work side by side with it, and also with any general Licensing Bill. These measures were surely of the most vital importance to the country. They all knew Mr. Cobden's famous saying, “The temperance question lies at the



root of all social and political reform;" and if that were so, all attempts made in this direction were, in national importance, second to none. He was not blind to the other agencies which must be at work. He did not suppose for a moment that legislation by itself was going to do the whole of the work; but it could pioneer and prepare the way for those other agencies which were regarded by the promoters as deeper and more vital still. It had been said by an American divine that "The soul of all improvement was the improvement of the soul." Most true—deeply and vitally true; but was it not also subordinately true "That the body of all improvement is the improvement of man's bodily conditions?" That was what was contemplated by the present Bill, which would help to open the path and clear away the difficulties which those representing the moral and spiritual agencies of the country knew to be so tremendous at the present time. Though he could not expect all their Lordships to rise to the level of his own enthusiasm upon this subject of the entertainment of the people, an enthusiasm which was not the growth of yesterday but of nearly a quarter of a century, yet he hoped their Lordships would consider that the experiment which the Bill incorporated was one worthy of consideration; that it stood upon even stronger ground now than it did in 1879, and that it deserved to have a firm footing found for it among those various agencies and experiments which must together work out the solution of our tremendous intemperance problem. He begged leave to present the Bill and to move that it be read a first time.

Bill for establishing a system of retail sale of intoxicating liquor by an authorised company—Presented (*The Lord Bishop of Chester.*)

\***LORD THRING** said that, after the exhaustive speech of the right rev. Prelate, he would make but few remarks. The Bill steered a middle course between fanatical temperance and fanatical intemperance, avoiding the despotism of the one and the demoralisation of the other. He thought the objects of the Bill eminently deserved encouragement. It proposed to set up orderly and well-conducted houses—he would not say "public-houses," as that term was to so

many people objectionable—as places of entertainment, which should combine the best features of both coffee-tavern and public-house, where the artisan and labourer might go with his wife and children without reproach, and in which he would find no encouragement to drink beer, if he preferred non-alcoholic liquors, but where he could get the best of alcoholic liquors too if he desired them. This was surely a subject which was most deserving of their Lordships' consideration. It was not advisable for them to seek to narrow or restrict the amusements of the poorer classes. What they should endeavour to do was to refine and raise them. How could they do that better than by a proposal of this kind? It was useless attempting to reach too sublime a level, for everybody did not desire to spend their leisure in museums or picture galleries. The general use of bicycles and tricycles had opened up the country to an extraordinary extent to the working classes, clerks, and artisans, and what the promoters of this measure desired was to secure suitable entertainment everywhere for the people. There would be no possible inducement for the managers of these houses to force the sale of liquors. They would certainly be dismissed if they did so, or if they permitted any excess or disorder, or anything of an immoral nature to occur in the houses. In any town or village, where the provisions of the measure might be carried into effect, well-ordered houses of entertainment would be secured. He would not enter into further explanations at the present stage, but he might say their Lordships would find that there would be no difficulty in supplying the capital of the company. That would be easily raised at 5 per cent.; and the whole of the details had been fully thought out. The Bill, he believed, would tend far more than apparently more important measures to the improvement and to the comfort of the poor, and towards a higher standard of every-day life amongst our workmen and artisans.

\***THE DUKE OF WESTMINSTER** said, the Bill dealt with one of our great social evils; and as it was not connected in any way with politics, there ought not to be any Party feeling introduced into the matter. The proposals contained in the right rev. Prelate's Bill had created

*The Bishop of Chester*

great interest throughout the country, and the measure had derived considerable support in many quarters which he hoped, as the Session proceeded, would increase and become sufficient to enable the Bill to pass—the sooner the better. The Bill frankly recognised that a great demand for alcoholic liquors existed in the country which was not to be stamped out by legislation; and, therefore, the right rev. Prelate's policy had been to meet the demand in that respect while rendering the supply as innocuous as it could be made. The Bill was of a constructive rather than of a destructive character. As had been pointed out, it was to be initiated by *plébiscite* and by a majority of the voters; and the percentage which the company would obtain was not exorbitant, as it was not to exceed 5 per cent., while advantages would be gained by the restriction of the hours and days of sale and by a material reduction in the number of public-houses. Though, no doubt, shutting them up in many cases would entail heavy cost upon the promoters, they considered that a fair and just principle had been adopted in dealing with people who had invested large sums in the trade carried on at present on the faith that their licences would, according to the long-established custom of the country, be renewed as a matter of course. Before the Committee which sat in 1877, of which he was Chairman, Mr. J. B. Carnegie, who had been long resident in Sweden, gave valuable evidence as to the system established there; and to quote the words of Lord Aberdare, the Deputy Chairman—

"If the risks were considerable, so were the respective advantages, and when great communities deeply sensible of the crime and pauperism springing from the present system and watching with great anxiety the rapid growth of female intemperance constituting a new danger to the community, were willing at their own risk and hazard to take steps to remove those evils, it would seem somewhat hard that the Legislature should refuse to create for them the requisite machinery and to entrust them with the requisite powers."

Since that time the evidence of the results in Norway and Sweden had become infinitely stronger, and the system had now spread so generally throughout those countries that, whereas they were formerly perhaps the most drunken in Europe, they had become the most sober—a very satisfactory testimony to the

invaluable results of the Gothenburg system. Those results—tangible, undoubted, and profitable not only to individuals, but to the community at large—ought to encourage us to initiate some such system in this country; and he was not aware that we were so different to the Scandinavians as to make that which had become a reality with them an impossibility in England. He would ask, therefore, that the promoters of this measure should be allowed to try the experiment as recommended by the Report of the Committee of 1877. Other schemes were in the air, one of a very drastic character, which would, to some extent, no doubt adversely affect the reform they wished to see brought about in this matter; but it could hardly be adopted generally throughout the country, at all events for a long time. This system, on the contrary, while far less drastic in its operation as regarded the great trade connected with drink fairly and honestly carried on, would promote better habits among the people; and as it would do as much towards making England free, sober, and great, as it had done in Scandinavia, it certainly ought to have a trial. Considering the degradation which affected so large a portion of our population, if the whole question could be taken in hand on the lines indicated in this Bill, great advantages would result not only in the promotion of temperance, but in the relief of taxation and in the direction of local improvements. The Bill was entitled to general support, first from the general public, because it would not deprive them of the drink which many thought they ought to have; secondly, from the teetotal party, because the public-houses would be reduced in number, and the licensing power greatly restricted; and, thirdly, it should, at all events, not meet with any great opposition from the publicans themselves, because they would be fairly and honestly dealt with. He hoped that those among their Lordships who were moderate drinkers themselves would support the Bill, which he strongly recommended to the House.

\*THE ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY: There was nothing to be said in illustration or commendation of the scheme which the right rev. Prelate had laid before them in his exhaustive speech in presenting

the Bill. The scheme would have the support of a very large mass of those who were most intimate with the homes and the habits of the poor, and who saw so much of the degradation and misery which attended intemperance. The subject of drink was a many-sided one, and no method or master key had been found to deal with it on a very large scale, though alleviations and palliations had been discovered. Intemperance was still the great misery of our country, and many would be thankful for a scheme which would enable moderate people in some measure to have their way on the question. It was these moderate people who were in danger of being squeezed out. The drastic remedy was that persons should not be able, under any circumstances, to obtain that which seemed to them, and which seemed to many of them, to be an article of food. This Bill came not to please the extremists on either side, and he believed there was a large body of opinion in its favour among moderate people throughout the country. He would not speak in opposition to the plan which the Government had placed before the country at this moment. The desire of the promoters of the Government Bill was that it might be in the power of the inhabitants of a certain area by a majority of two-thirds to determine that there should be no public-houses, or only a limited number; but while power would be given for carrying out those objects, on the other hand a majority of above one-third would be able to determine that things should remain as they were. The simple and earnest request of the promoters of this Bill was that it might be also rendered possible for a majority in any area to secure for themselves a moderate supply of pure beverages under regulated conditions so as to ensure the respectability of those who live by the trade, and the best interests of those who are entertained. If the Bill were properly worked out it would further contribute to many schemes which would be of the greatest benefit and would promote the happiness of the people.

THE LORD PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL AND SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA (The Earl of Kimberley): My Lords, I wish to join in thanking the right rev. Prelate for having brought this matter before the

*The Archbishop of Canterbury*

House. Your Lordships are aware that the Committee of which I had the honour to be a Member expressed the opinion that it was very desirable this experiment should be tried in order to see how far it would mitigate the evils arising from intemperance. It seems to me that the best mode of bringing the matter to a test is that the scheme should be embodied in a Bill. Mere vague statements on the subject do not enable us to deal with it in a satisfactory manner, and I am glad, therefore, that the right rev. Prelate has a Bill prepared to lay before the House, and then your Lordships will see what the machinery suggested is for carrying out the scheme, and whether there is in it sufficient to enable the experiment to be made successful if tried. Your Lordships will agree with me that it would be idle at this stage, as we have not seen the Bill, to attempt to review or criticise the various proposals which have been made. Obviously, they have been well-considered, but the matter is not one which is easy of arrangement. But I think it most desirable that a scheme of this kind, which promises, at all events, considerable alleviation of the evils of intemperance, should be laid before Parliament and fairly considered. As the most rev. Prelate has said, if a Bill such as this should pass, it will not interfere with a more drastic scheme. Therefore, it seems to me the most reasonable thing that a Bill on the subject should be brought before your Lordships' House, and I have no doubt it will receive the full consideration which so important a subject demands.

Bill read 1<sup>a</sup>. (No. 26.)

#### HIGH SHERIFFS' FEES.

##### MOTION FOR A SELECT COMMITTEE.

THE EARL OF CAMPERDOWN moved for the appointment of a Select Committee to inquire into and report upon the fees and profits received by the High Sheriffs of counties or their Deputies in the execution of their office, and the mode in which the duties of the High Sheriff now ordinarily performed by deputy might best be carried out. He said that three years ago their Lordships had passed a Bill dealing with some of the duties of High Sheriffs and for defraying the cost entailed by their discharge. It

provided that County Councils should, with the concurrence of the Lord Chancellor, make regulations for the reception of Her Majesty's Judges, and that the cost so far as it was not defrayed by the Treasury should fall upon the county rate. Considerable difference of opinion was expressed as the Bill was passing through the House, and the Lord Chancellor proposed an alternative plan going rather deeper into the subject and suggesting a rather more comprehensive remedy. That was, that if the fees now received by the Under Sheriffs for the discharge of the legal duties of the Sheriffs were taken over by the Treasury or by some Central Authority, the whole of the costs now thrown upon the Sheriffs might be defrayed without any charge upon the county rate. He himself, as introducer of the Bill, had no preference at all for one plan over the other, so long as relief was afforded to the Sheriffs, and he would be willing to accept the alternative plan if, upon inquiry, it should be found a preferable mode of dealing with the subject. Unfortunately, he had not been able to obtain from the Under Sheriffs a statement of the emoluments they were now receiving, and he therefore proposed to obtain that information by means of the appointment of a Select Committee on the matter.

THE LORD CHANCELLOR (Lord HERSHELL): My Lords, I think the information likely to be obtained by such a Committee as the noble Earl proposes would be very useful. The question of Sheriffs' expenses is of great importance, and it is desirable to deal with it in the best fashion possible. The proposal formerly was that the Sheriffs' expenses in receiving the Judges should fall upon the County Councils. There appear to be considerable objections to a scheme of that description upon which I will not dwell now; but it certainly deserves consideration whether this question of Sheriffs' fees should not be dealt with on a similar basis throughout the country; and if it should turn out that they are sufficient to meet the expenses of both Sheriff and Under Sheriff, that would seem to be a better scheme than allowing the matter to be dealt with by the County Councils, and throwing the burden upon them, in case it turns out that the fees are not sufficient to discharge those expenses.

Moved, "That a Select Committee be appointed to inquire into and report upon the fees and profits received by the High Sheriffs of counties or their deputies in the execution of their office, and the mode in which the duties of the High Sheriff now ordinarily performed by deputy may be best carried out."—(*The Earl of Camperdown.*)

LORD ASHBOURNE: My Lords, I think the Committee moved for by the noble Earl will be of great interest and importance, and I trust it will supply valuable information. In Ireland the difficulty has been growing in acuteness for several years—it is not a question of to-day or of last year alone. I know the great difficulties connected with the question; and that at this time of day, when the incomes of country gentlemen are certainly as much reduced in Ireland as in any part of Her Majesty's dominions, it is an obvious hardship upon them, with their increased family claims, to impose upon them the necessity of putting their hands into their pockets. At this time they cannot afford it. Many of them have had to diminish their family expenses; and it is unreasonable they should be called upon to make great sacrifices in order to enable them to perform what, after all, are partly the duties of the State. It is all very well to ask country gentlemen possessing thousands a year to undertake these duties, but it is a great hardship to call upon the poorer gentry in Ireland to perform them. It has been a matter of increasing difficulty, and in some counties requiring sometimes great pressure, to induce anyone to undertake this onerous and thankless task. We all know, from the public Press, that the difficulty has recently culminated in Ireland in litigation. I only refer to that to show that real difficulty exists in the matter, and that it is important, when the noble Earl suggests names for his Committee, that he should take care there shall be among them adequate representation of Ireland, in order that the matter as regards that country may be fully investigated and looked into in all its aspects.

Motion agreed to.

#### LEVEL CROSSINGS.

#### QUESTION. OBSERVATIONS.

LORD LAMINGTON, in asking Her Majesty's Government whether they would take action to obtain further

powers for the abolition of level crossings on railways, said: This question concerned both the convenience and the safety of the public. Great inconvenience was experienced at the level crossings over railways, particularly in these days when the great increase of traffic on the lines compelled the frequent closing of the gates, and delayed the traffic along the roads while waiting the passage of the trains. Further, level crossings were often close to the stations, which were generally situate on or near high roads; and though shunting operations were in breach of the Act of 1863, they were often carried on over level crossings. As regarded the danger attendant upon them, in the last Report (1891) presented to the House dealing with railway accidents Sir Courtenay Boyle said—

“In most of the cases of level crossings which were brought to the notice of this Department by the occurrence of accidents or the complaints of Local Authorities and individuals the Board of Trade had no statutory power to compel provision to be made for the public safety, but in many instances the Railway Companies concerned have been communicated with and satisfactory arrangements, usually necessitating the construction of a foot-bridge or subway, have in several instances been made.”

The Railway Clauses Act of 1863 gave power to the Board of Trade to insist on the construction of foot-bridges and subways, but all the railways constructed before 1863 were exempted from the operation of the Act. In the Railway Clauses Act of 1845 (Section 48) it was laid down that no train must go over a level crossing at a speed of more than four miles an hour; and although it was no exaggeration to say that that provision had become nowadays a dead letter, it showed that the Legislature recognised the danger of level crossings. In 1891 66 people were killed at level crossings; in 1890, 83 people; and in 1889, 72 people. In the same years there were respectively 49, 41, and 44 cases of trains running through the gates at level crossings. That showed that the danger was not imaginary. The Board of Trade had from time to time insisted on adequate precautions being taken for the safety of railway passengers, and as a result only five passengers were killed in 1891—a number which compared very favourably with the number killed at level crossings in the same year. Again, what public excitement and sorrow were caused by

the lamentable Thirsk railway accident last year; at which, however, only 10 people were killed. The highways of the country should be kept as unobstructed as possible, and the public should be given immunity from unnecessary danger in the use of them. This country undoubtedly was far ahead of the precautions taken in the United States and on the Continent; but the Board of Trade ought to have the same powers over the lines built previously to 1863 as it had over the lines built since. The great railways running to the North—particularly the Caledonian—had already shown what could be done in the required direction; and in asking Government to promote legislation he would point out that, whereas the most elaborate precautions for the safety of railway passengers were sure to fail sometimes, an unfailing and positive remedy for the evil of level crossings was attainable.

\*THE EARL OF ABERDEEN said, that it was to be borne in mind that, in flat districts where level crossings occurred, the formation of bridges either above or below the road level would cause great inconvenience to the people in the district, especially to the farmers, in consequence of the alteration of gradient. A well-known Inspector of the Board of Trade (Colonel Yolland) once said that he should be voted a nuisance in some places if a general provision of the nature suggested were to be carried out. Obviously, in any road traffic, steep gradients were inconvenient, and the ruling gradient in a district had to be kept in view. No doubt a load which at present required but one horse would need two if these bridges were introduced. Again, a large compulsory expenditure by a sweeping Ordinance would press very heavily on the railways. He urged this argument with diffidence, because he knew the Railway Companies were not now enjoying great popularity. But such an Ordinance would press hardly on some of the smaller companies, though in certain cases it might be very valuable. He would suggest that the Railway Companies were most anxious of their own accord to carry out the necessary improvements alluded to; and, indeed, as the quotation of the noble Lord from the Board of Trade Report showed, in many cases they had done so already. That quotation showed that the Railway

Companies recognised the seriousness and importance of the matter, and the necessity of carrying out these improvements wherever practicable, in such a way as to cause the least inconvenience for the purpose of preventing accidents. Moreover, it was to be remembered that the accidents of which statistics were given by the noble Lord, and which were much to be deplored, must be attributed in a large degree to the carelessness or want of caution of those who used the level crossings in their urgent desire to get across without regard to the safety which was most carefully enjoined upon the public by railway placards and other means. He hoped, therefore, there would not be too great a readiness on the part of the Board of Trade to issue a sweeping Order in the matter, while no doubt whatever recommendations might be made would receive the same attention as on former occasions.

\*LORD PLAYFAIR said, as to the new level crossings made since the Acts of 1845 and 1863, there were ample powers though some difficulties in the administration of the powers and duties imposed upon the Board of Trade under those Acts. The Board of Trade was bound, whenever a Bill was brought before Parliament, to send down an officer to examine whether a level crossing could be made with safety to the public. That duty was always performed, but there sometimes arose a difference of opinion between the Parliamentary Committees and the Board of Trade. Since 1875 up to the end of last year there were Bills brought before both Houses of Parliament in which 1,259 level crossings were demanded. The Board of Trade sent down their officer, and, as the result of his inquiries, the Board of Trade reported that 585 only ought to be allowed. Parliament sometimes went against the recommendations of the Board of Trade. Seven hundred and eighty-one level crossings were allowed by the Railway Committees before whom the Bills went, and they became law. Thus nearly 200 level crossings were allowed by the Railway Committees of both Houses of Parliament which the Board of Trade had said were dangerous and ought not to be allowed. He hoped a better understanding between the Parliamentary Committees and the Board of Trade would

arise from a recent amendment of the Standing Order which had been passed in both Houses, and which was that the Committees should hear the Reports of the officers of the Board of Trade and take their evidence if they objected to the level crossings. With that amended Standing Order he hoped none of those dangerous level crossings would be allowed. Many of the old crossings had become dangerous; for although they were originally in uninhabited places, the towns had extended there. The companies had not in many cases power to acquire land in order to make bridges; and, moreover, on account of the extension of the towns, it would be extremely expensive to do so. The Board of Trade did not think that legislation was required at the present moment. They had great confidence that under the new Standing Order of both Houses there would be a better understanding between the Committees and the Board of Trade, and that the level crossings would be given with great caution in the future.

#### DEBTORS' ACT.

THE LORD CHANCELLOR moved that the following Lords be named of the Select Committee, namely,

L. Chancellor.	L. Watson.
E. Dudley.	L. de Vesci.
V. Cross.	L. Monkswell.
L. Bp. Rochester.	L. Ashbourne.
L. Balfour.	L. Thring.
L. Vernon.	L. Knutsford.
L. Kenry ( <i>E. Dunraven and Mountearl</i> ).	

House adjourned at twenty minutes past Six o'clock, till To-morrow, a quarter past Ten o'clock.

### HOUSE OF COMMONS,

*Thursday, 2nd March 1893.*

#### QUESTIONS.

##### NEW HOSPITAL AT JERUSALEM.

SIR JOHN KENNAWAY (Devon, Honiton): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether he will make inquiries, through

Her Majesty's Ambassador at Constantinople, as to the reason of the long delay in granting the firman applied for for the erection of a new Hospital for Poor Sick Jews on the Jaffa road, outside the walls of Jerusalem, for which a site has been purchased and £5,000 provided, to begin the building; and whether Her Majesty's Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs would move Sir Clare Ford to use his best endeavours to facilitate and expedite the granting of the firman?

\*THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Sir E. GREY, Northumberland, Berwick): This matter is receiving the attention of Her Majesty's Ambassador at Constantinople.

#### LABOURERS' COTTAGES AT BALLYMENA.

MR. MACARTNEY (Antrim, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether any steps have been taken by the Board of Guardians of Ballymena Union, in connection with the scheme adopted by a committee of that Board, for the erection of houses under the Labourers (Ireland) Acts in certain divisions of the Unions?

\*THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. J. MORLEY, Newcastle-upon-Tyne): I am informed by the Local Government Board that on the 21st January last the Guardians had before them maps and particulars of the sites proposed for three blocks of labourers' cottages in the Union, and that the plans were approved of by the Guardians, who directed their solicitors to take the necessary steps with a view to the adoption of the proposed scheme.

#### CLAREMORRIS RAILWAY.

MR. JACKSON (Leeds, N.): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether any progress is being made with the construction of the railway from Claremorris to Collorney, under the agreement made between the Treasury and the Waterford and Limerick Railway Company; and if he can say when the line will be open for traffic?

THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Sir J. T. HIBBERT, Oldham): The Waterford and Limerick Railway Company state that they are negotiating with a contractor for the construction of the line, and that the plans are being re-

vised by their engineer. The Company have been informed that, unless they give a reasonable explanation for the delay that has already taken place, and an immediate and satisfactory assurance that the terms of their agreement will be speedily carried out, steps will be taken to compel them to proceed. It is not possible at present to give a definite date for the opening of the line.

MR. JACKSON: What time has been allowed then?

SIR J. T. HIBBERT: I have not the date here. I will let the right hon. Gentleman know.

#### CRIMEAN AND INDIAN MUTINY VETERANS.

MR. HANBURY (Preston): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War if he can state generally what are the conditions laid down by the War Office as to special pensions to veterans of the Crimean War and Indian Mutiny; what were the means employed to bring the fact of such special pensions being offered, and the conditions attached to the offer, under the notice of those likely to benefit by them; and if he can state what information the War Office possesses as to the number of similar veterans who are in receipt of an ordinary pension, and whose pension is wholly or partly appropriated by the Guardians towards their maintenance in workhouses?

\*THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (Mr. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN, Stirling, &c.): The conditions required for the grant of a pension, up to the number of 100 a year, are that the applicant should have had 10 years' service, and should have a medal for a campaign before 1860, that he should be destitute, and that the pension would not be wholly claimed by Guardians for maintenance. In selecting men for the limited number at present available preference is given to those discharged with good character. It was not thought necessary to advertise these grants; but the conditions were given to every person applying for them. There is no information as to the number of "similar veterans" on pension who are in workhouses; but in 1888 it was ascertained that out of 63,000 pensioners only 616

were in workhouses in Great Britain, and the "similar veterans" would probably constitute a much smaller number.

#### SHERIFF'S SEIZURES BY NIGHT IN IRELAND.

**MR. T. W. RUSSELL** (Tyrone, S.) : I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he has yet completed his inquiries into the alleged breaches of the Law by Irish Sheriffs in executing Civil Bill Decrees between sunset and sunrise ; and, if so, whether he is now prepared, definitely, to inform the House for how many of the 712 alleged cases he has found proof ; and if he will supply the particulars of such cases (if any), so that they may be inquired into and tested ?

\***MR. J. MORLEY** : As I explained some short time ago, there was an over-statement in the figures supplied to me with regard to the number of cases in the time of the late Government of seizures, or attempted seizures, under Civil Bill Decrees between sunset and sunrise with police protection. The Constabulary Authorities have since carefully investigated the matter, and have now furnished details of 66 actual cases. I cannot undertake the responsibility of furnishing a Return of these cases, which might obviously form the basis of proceedings outside this House. But I shall be happy to permit the hon. Member to inspect it.

\***MR. T. W. RUSSELL** : Inasmuch as the right hon. Gentleman made the promise, and I went to the Irish Office on Monday without result, I wish to know whether I can see them at the House on any particular day ? I am not going to the Irish Office again.

\***MR. J. MORLEY** : I deeply regret that the hon. Gentleman has been put to any inconvenience. The Papers shall be brought to the House this evening.

**MR. A. J. BALFOUR** (Manchester, E.) : The original statement was that there were 712 cases ; the present answer of the right hon. Gentleman speaks only of 66.

**MR. J. MORLEY** : So far.

**MR. A. J. BALFOUR** : Does the right hon. Gentleman describe that as an over-statement ?

\***MR. J. MORLEY** : The over-statement arose from the fact that the authorities who prepared the Return and

furnished me with the figures took the hour named in the Sheriff's requisition as the hour of actual seizure.

**MR. T. M. HEALY** (Louth, N.) : Are the authorities who supplied the information the same as those who always supplied the Leader of the Opposition with his information ?

[No answer was given.]

#### EDUCATION EXAMINERS.

**MR. KIMBER** (Wandsworth) : I beg to ask the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education, with reference to the appointment of clerks in the Education Department to the post of examiner in that Department, whether practical experience in official work has been taken to qualify a Sub-Inspector of Schools as an Inspector ; and whether there is any reason why special knowledge and practical experience of departmental work and requirements should not be taken as sufficient special qualification to enable a clerk to be promoted to an examinership ?

**THE VICE PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL** (Mr. A. H. D. ACLAND, York, W.R., Rotherham) : Practical experience in the work assigned to him, together with other qualifications, personal and educational, have been held to qualify a Sub-Inspector of Schools for promotion to the Inspectorate. As I have already stated, there is nothing to prevent a clerk applying for an appointment as examiner, and receiving it, if he satisfies the requisite conditions.

#### THE STATUS OF PRISON WARDERS.

**MR. LAWRENCE** (Liverpool, Abercromby) : I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether there is any practical difference in the work of a warder and assistant warder in Her Majesty's local prisons ; whether he can inform the House of the average number of years it takes an assistant warder to rise to the post of warder ; whether his attention has been called to the inequality of promotion in some prisons, as compared with others, sometimes caused by the drafting of warders from one prison to another, as in the case of the Walton Gaol ; and whether his attention was drawn to a Petition from the assistant warders at Walton Gaol, sent to him on the 2nd February, before



it was refused by the Commissioners on the 4th ?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. ASQUITH, Fife, E.) : The warder takes charge of a ward of prisoners and is responsible to the Governor for their safe custody, employment and discipline. In some cases it may happen that the assistant warder performs almost identical duties, but his normal function is, as the name implies, to assist, and in the absence of the warder to take his place. The answer to the second paragraph is that during the last five years the average period has been nine years. My attention has been called to complaints on the subject referred to in the third paragraph. The matter was investigated by a Departmental Committee in 1891, who reported that they did not consider it advisable to alter the present system of promotion or to abolish the distinctions of rank, and the Prison Commissioners are of the same opinion. The Petition in question has now reached me, and will receive my careful consideration. It was not, in the first instance, observed that the Petition was addressed to the Secretary of State, and owing to this inadvertence it was dealt with by the Commissioners.

#### COLCHESTER INFANTRY CAMP.

CAPTAIN NAYLOR - LEYLAND (Colchester) : I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War if he will lay upon the Table of the House a Copy of the Military Report upon the Infantry Camp at Colchester; whether, as it is the intention of the Government not to confine the tenders to local contractors, he will place a clause in all the tenders fixing the minimum rate of wages to be paid in every class of work, since it can be conclusively shown that the work can be performed cheaper by local resident builders; and will he state upon what grounds it is proposed to import strange contractors for the purpose ?

\*MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN : I am not aware to what Report the hon. and gallant Member refers. He seems to be unaware of the general system on which contracts are made. Tenders are always called for from local contractors of repute; but others not on the spot are included for the sake of securing a healthy competition. If local firms can do the work more cheaply than firms from a

distance, as ought to be the case, a local firm would naturally obtain the contract. Contracts provide that the contractor shall pay the wages current in the locality. If minimum rates were fixed, and wages rose during the contract, there would be nothing to prevent the contractor from paying less than the current wages.

#### POOR LAW GUARDIANS' MEETINGS.

MR. COBB (Warwick, S.E., Rugby) : I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board whether, in cases in which the Local Government Board have sanctioned days for the meetings of Boards of Guardians which happen to fall upon Good Friday, Christmas Day, a Bank Holiday, or any day appointed for a public holiday, it is competent for the Guardians at a previous meeting to substitute the day before or after the sanctioned day, without obtaining the further sanction of the Local Government Board to such substitution; whether any business transacted at a meeting held upon such substituted day, without having obtained such further sanction, would be out of order and illegal; and whether, if such further sanction is essential and the business would be out of order and illegal, the Local Government Board will issue an Order to meet such cases ?

THE PRESIDENT OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. H. H. FOWLER, Wolverhampton, E.) : The regulations in force as to meetings of Boards of Guardians empower the Guardians, with the consent of the Local Government Board, to change the day of ordinary meeting of the Guardians. The proceedings at an ordinary meeting which is held on a substituted day without such consent would be out of order. It is my intention to alter the regulations to meet the cases referred to.

#### THE CASE OF WILLIAM VALLICE.

MR. LOUGH (Islington, W.) : I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether his attention has been drawn to the fact that William Vallice, a cabdriver, badge 6147, was sentenced at the City Court to one month's imprisonment with hard labour, and his licence revoked, for wanton driving on the 9th inst; and whether, considering that the prisoner received an excellent character from his employer,

*Mr. Lawrence*

who compensated the old man whom the prisoner had knocked down, and who had received no serious injury, and that this was the prisoner's first offence, he will consider whether some mitigation might be made in the sentence?

**MR. ASQUITH:** Yes; I understand the facts proved to be that Vallice was driving at the rate of eight miles an hour, and on the wrong side of the street. He knocked down an old man of 79 years of age, and though shouted to by the bystanders he made no attempt to pull up. I am informed by the Magistrate that but for Vallice's good character his sentence would have been more severe. The compensation which the employer agreed to pay was regarded by him as no extenuation of the driver's offence, and had it not been paid by agreement, the Magistrate would have made an order for payment of compensation. Under the circumstances, I regret that I do not feel justified in interfering.

#### POLYNESIAN LABOUR AT QUEENSLAND.

**MR. JOHN ELLIS** (Nottingham, Rushcliffe): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies whether he can state the figures for 1892 respecting the Polynesian labour traffic to Queensland, in continuation of those given in Return, No. 17, of Session, 1893; whether, in view of the lamentably high rate of mortality in Queensland disclosed by this Return, the Secretary of State can take any steps not only to secure that the traffic itself shall be conducted with due regard to the dictates of humanity, but that the mortality of the labourers in Queensland shall be reduced; and whether, apart from this high mortality on the plantations, the Secretary of State has any reliable information as to the humane and satisfactory conduct of the recruiting from the islands?

**THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES** (Mr. S. BUXTON, Tower Hamlets, Poplar): The figures for 1892 have not yet been received, and are probably not at present complete; but the Colonial Government will be asked to supply them as soon as possible. The death-rate among the labourers on the plantations, of rather over 50 per 1,000, is unquestionably

high. It has to be recollected, however, that in the islands themselves, from which these labourers are brought, the ordinary rate of mortality is also very high. The Secretary of State has no grounds for believing that the mortality on the plantations in Queensland is due to ill-treatment. I may add that, while the regulation of the traffic as regards the actual recruiting and the re-landing of the labourers is under the supervision of Her Majesty's Government, the duty and responsibility of looking after the labourers, so long as they are in Queensland, is entirely vested in the Colonial authorities under the powers of self-government granted to them. The Secretary of State has no reason for concluding that that duty has been, or will be, neglected. The Papers which will shortly be laid before Parliament contain much valuable and trustworthy information respecting the recruiting as now conducted; and my hon. Friend, after reading them, will be in a position to judge whether the recruiting, as now carried out, is being conducted in an humane and satisfactory manner.

#### THE VOLUNTEER FORCE.

**MR. BROWN** (Shropshire, Wellington): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War if he will state the number of officers required to fill up the vacant commissions in the Volunteer Force; and whether he is going to take any steps to provide a remedy to fill up these vacancies?

**\*MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN:** The deficiency in Volunteer officers, if the maximum establishment is taken as the basis for calculation, is 1,417 subalterns, and 260 above that rank. It must be remembered, however, that there exists a relative deficiency in privates as regards maximum establishment. It is to be hoped that the steps already taken will result in an accession of strength to the number of officers.

#### THE RAILWAY COMMISSION.

**SIR ALFRED HICKMAN** (Wolverhampton, W.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department on how many days the Railway Commissioners sat, and how many cases they decided during the year 1892?

**MR. ASQUITH :** During the year 1892 the Court of the Railway and Canal Commission sat in Court 22 days. This does not include the days the Commission met to consider applications for approval of working agreements, and to prepare and consider judgments, and for purposes connected with this administrative duties, nor the days upon which the Registrar sat to hear and decide interlocutory matters and inquiries as to damages. The work before the Court and the cases decided will appear in the Annual Report for 1892, which is in preparation, and will shortly be laid before Parliament.

#### WAGES IN GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS.

**MR. E. STANHOPE** (Lincolnshire, Horncastle) : I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether, as it appears that the Labour Department of the Board of Trade is to examine into the rate of wages to be paid to men employed by other Departments of the State, he will take care that no steps are taken calculated to diminish the employment by the War Office of Reserve and discharged soldiers ?

**\*MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN :** The question of wages in Government Departments has been remitted to the Labour Department of the Board of Trade only for the purpose of the collection and collation of facts, the decision resting with the Heads of the several Departments. The right hon. Gentleman may rest assured that I will do all in my power to protect the interests of Reserve and discharged soldiers in their claim to such employment as they are fitted for.

**MR. E. STANHOPE :** When will the Report be laid on the Table ?

**MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN :** The Labour Department will not present a Report on the subject, but will supply material to the Government on which they can decide.

#### THE WEIGHING OF CATTLE ACT.

**MR. SHAW-STEWART** (Renfrew, E.) : I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade if he is aware that since the passing of "The Weighing of Cattle Act, 1891," some auctioneers are erecting within their cattle marts weighbridges with automatic dials, the smallest divi-

sions of which show only quarters of hundredweight, so that the weight of cattle cannot be ascertained to a pound ; and if he will ascertain whether Inspectors of Weights and Measures can accurately apply the test for sensitiveness on a dial weighbridge of which the smallest division marks 28 lbs., whereas under No. 55 of the "Model Regulations, 1890," the test is that 2 lbs. should move the finger of a 2-ton weighbridge ?

**THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE** (Mr. MUNDELLA, Sheffield, Brightside) : I was not aware until I saw the Notice Paper of the particulars referred to in the first portion of the question of the hon. Member. It does not rest with the Board of Trade to approve the form of weighbridge to be used in cattle markets, but it has been brought to their notice that one or two Inspectors have not sufficiently applied the test for sensitiveness under the Model Regulations, and the Department are in communication with the Inspectors on the subject.

#### SILVER COIN AT LAGOS.

**MR. SAMUEL MONTAGU** (Tower Hamlets, Whitechapel) : I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies if he is aware that Messrs. J. H. Schröder and Co. applied on 15th January last to the Crown Agents for the Colonies for English silver coin for shipment to Lagos, and that in the reply dated 16th January they were referred to the African Banking Corporation, who were the constituted bankers to the Lagos Government ; whether he is aware that on 20th February Messrs. Schröder applied to the African Banking Corporation for £3,000 in English silver for Lagos, and were refused on the plea that the Crown Agents can grant no further orders until the prohibition of the Colonial Government is removed ; and whether he has heard that silver coin is very scarce at Lagos, and that this refusal to allow silver to be shipped is a hindrance to trade ?

**MR. SYDNEY BUXTON :** The correspondence referred to as having taken place in January took place in January, 1892, not this year. The correspondence referred to as having taken place in February took place this year. The African Banking Corporation applied to the Crown Agents for an order for the £3,000, presumably required by Messrs.

Schröder; but the application was refused on the grounds that the Corporation had just previously received an order for £20,000, and the Governor had requested by telegraph that that amount, which is very largely in excess of the usual requirements of the Colony, might be treated as the limit of importation for the present. No representation as to a scarcity of silver coin at Lagos has been received from the Governor.

**MR. S. MONTAGU:** Will the Under Secretary take into consideration the desirability of extending the limit?

**MR. S. BUXTON:** We have telegraphed for information, and, as I have already stated, the Governor does not think it advisable to have more silver sent out at present.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** Is the Under Secretary aware that the African Banking Corporation charge a very heavy commission? Cannot the merchants have silver direct from the Mint instead of through the Corporation?

**MR. S. BUXTON:** The arrangement with the African Banking Company will cease very shortly, as they are going to withdraw from Lagos, and then some new arrangement will be made between the Government and the merchants.

#### THE NAVAL MANŒUVRES.

**MR. PENN (Lewisham):** I beg to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty whether it is contemplated to hold the Naval Manœuvres this year on the same scale as before?

**THE SECRETARY TO THE ADMIRALTY (Sir U. KAY-SHUTTLEWORTH, Lancashire, Clitheroe):** It is proposed to hold Naval Manœuvres as before, but the precise form they will assume, and therefore the scale on which they will be carried out, has not yet been decided.

#### THE ASSESSMENT OF THE LAW COURTS.

**MR. W. F. D. SMITH (Strand, Westminster):** I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board whether he is willing to re-consider the assessment of the Courts of Law in the parish of St. Clement Danes, taking into consideration the fact that assessments on other house property in the district have greatly increased?

**SIR J. T. HIBBERT:** Parliament has expressly provided for the rating of the Law Courts property by the Courts of Justice Concentration (Site) Act, 1865. Section 4 provides that the lands (which means the lands and all that may be erected on the lands)—

“Shall continue liable to poor and other rates, but they shall not be assessed to any tax or rate on a higher rateable value than that on which they were assessed on January 1, 1865.”

There are similar provisions in other Acts of Parliament affecting a considerable amount of Government property.

#### DYING, NOT DRUNK.

**MR. SPICER (Monmouth, &c.):** I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if his attention has been drawn to the case of the late Mrs. Brown, whom it is reported, in spite of a doctor's injunctions that she should be conveyed to the hospital because she was suffering from apoplexy, was dragged to the Wolverhampton Police Station by two policemen and locked up all night on the charge of being drunk and incapable, with the results that she was found dying next morning and was dead by the evening; and whether there are no police matrons at this and other stations, whose duty it is to attend to women when under arrest?

**MR. ASQUITH:** The conduct of the two policemen is now under investigation by the Watch Committee; in the meantime, they have been suspended without pay. The facts appear from the evidence at the inquest to be as stated, except that there was medical evidence to show that the woman's removal to the police station could not have affected her life, as it is stated that she could not have lived in any case. There is a police matron attached to the station; but by a most regrettable mistake she was not called in in this case, as both the sergeant and constable on reserve duty considered that Mrs. Brown was simply drunk and incapable.

#### SCOTCH PROCURATORS FISCAL.

**MR. SEYMOUR KEAY (Elgin, &c.):** I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland whether, in view of the necessity recently imposed on the Government of refusing its sanction to a nomination to a Procurator Fiscalship of Morayshire, made by the Sheriff, and the consequent great

delay in filling the appointment, he will consider the advisability of amending the Act of 1877 so as to place the nominations to the office of Procurator Fiscal in Scotland in the hands of the Secretary for Scotland?

**THE SECRETARY FOR SCOTLAND** (Sir G. TREVELYAN, Glasgow, Bridgeton): The appointment to the Sheriff clerkship has been transferred by legislation from the Sheriff to the Crown, and presumably the same transference of appointment will take place as regards the Procurator Fiscalship.

#### THE MAXIM-NORDENFELDT COMPANY.

**MR. ROBERT WALLACE** (Edinburgh, E.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether his attention has been called to an article in the current number of *The Investors' Review*, entitled, "The Maxim - Nordenfeldt Company," in which it is alleged that permanent officials at the War Office and officers on active service in considerable numbers, and often of high rank, are shareholders and Directors of this Company; whether it is in accordance with the Rules of the Service for officers in its purchasing and fighting branches to hold a greater or smaller pecuniary stake in companies interested in pressing a particular weapon upon the Government, or in furnishing foreign Powers with the best munitions of war; whether the Gardner gun has been proved to be a cheaper and better instrument than the Maxim or Nordenfeldt, and whether its comparative merits have been investigated and tested by the Department by public competitive trial or otherwise; whether there is any, and what, difference in cost to the Revenue between the Maxim and Nordenfeldt guns supplied by the Company and those manufactured at Enfield; and whether he can say if any, and how many, persons have been killed or wounded by the bursting of Nordenfeldt guns in any operations of the Service?

\***MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN**: I have seen the article in *The Investors' Review*, which contains what is alleged to be a list of the shareholders in the Maxim-Nordenfeldt Company. I do not find in that list the names of any permanent officials at the War Office, nor among the military officers named, as now holding shares, more than a very few

who are not either retired, unemployed, or belonging to the Reserve Forces. There is no rule against an officer holding shares in any company established for a legitimate object; but an official of the War Department—whether civil or military—is forbidden to hold shares in any company (other than a Railway Company or any similar company) which enters into a contract with the Department. The Gardner gun has not been proved to be cheaper and better than the Maxim or Nordenfeldt. The Gardner system was abandoned some time ago for future supplies in favour of other systems. A Gardner gun of a modified pattern has recently been submitted to us, and arrangements for its trial are now being made. No Nordenfeldt guns have been ordered from the Company since 1889. The Enfield cost of manufacture was then considerably lower than the price charged by the Company, but as royalty was not included no exact comparison can be made. The manufacture of Maxim guns has only recently been taken up at Enfield, and it is estimated that the price, including royalty, will compare favourably with the price now paid to the Company. No accidents of the nature referred to have occurred in the land service with the Nordenfeldt gun.

#### GLIN PETTY SESSIONS.

**MR. MICHAEL AUSTIN** (Limerick, W.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland if he is aware that the Glin (County Limerick) Petty Sessions have been frequently adjourned during the past 12 months owing to the non-attendance of Magistrates, and whether the Irish Executive will take the necessary steps to remedy this state of things?

\***MR. J. MORLEY**: It appears that the Glin Petty Sessions are held fortnightly, and that on two occasions during the past 12 months they fell through in consequence of the non-attendance of Magistrates.

#### H.M.S. HOWE—FERROL HARBOUR.

**MR. GOURLEY** (Sunderland): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty whether the Squadron under Admiral Fairfax entered Ferrol Harbour with the engines going at the rate of 50 revolutions, but that, as soon as he

passed the Pereira Reef, an order was signalled for the revolutions to be reduced to 25, the result being that the *Howe*, the second ship, lost her steerage way and became slewed to port by the violence of the flood tide; if so, why the Board of Admiralty have issued a Memorandum condemning the officers of the *Howe*, seeing that in the same Memorandum they approve the finding of the Court Martial, which condemned the reduction of speed by the Admiral in the Narrows as inexpedient, as well as for entering the harbour on a flood tide; and will the Board of Admiralty, in addition to the Memorandum regarding charts issued on the 14th April, 1892, in future give instructions to Commanders-in-Chief and senior officers on entering harbours, whether at home or abroad, to take the assistance (as customary in the Mercantile Marine) of qualified pilots?

\*SIR U. KAY-SHUTTLEWORTH: The Squadron entered Ferrol Channel at 35 revolutions of the flagship's engines, which were reduced to 25 revolutions on nearing the harbour. The *Howe* did not lose her steerage way, nor was she slewed by the tide. No reason is seen to make any alteration in the present regulations relating to piloting Her Majesty's ships.

#### H.M.S. *HOWE*—REPAIRING DAMAGE.

MR. GOURLEY: I beg to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty if he can inform the House the number of moulds that have already been used for the purpose of planking the damage to the port side of H.M.S. *Howe*, and can he state whether the starboard side has been examined; if so, how many moulds will be required to be used in planking them; in face of the incomplete knowledge of the damage to the bottom, can he now say whether or not there is much chance of saving the vessel; and, in case of failure, what remuneration are the salvors to receive beyond the value of the wreck?

SIR U. KAY-SHUTTLEWORTH: It is not known how many moulds have been made for planking the bottom of the *Howe*, as this work is entirely in the hands of the Salvage Company. The starboard side has been partially examined, but bad weather is delaying the work. The Salvage Company remain confident as to the ultimate successful salvage of

the *Howe*. In case of failure, the salvors do not receive the value of the wreck, or any other remuneration, except in respect of stores that may be salvaged.

#### HERRING BRAND FEES.

MR. CROMBIE (Kincardineshire): I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland what is the amount of the surplus collected from the herring brand fees still at the disposal of the Government; whether the greater part of this sum has been drawn from the Fisheries on the East Coast of Scotland; and whether a corresponding portion will be spent on the improvement of harbours on this coast?

SIR G. TREVELYAN: After taking into account the liabilities undertaken by the Board in respect of harbours, there is no surplus left available at present from the herring brand fees. Practically the whole of these fees are derived from the East Coast, the West Coast having in the year 1891 contributed only £30, out of £4,272. Since 1887, £18,000 has been spent on harbours on the East Coast, and £9,000 on the West Coast. As the Western Highlands get a special grant for harbours under an Act, the whole of this money referred to in the question ought to be spent on the East Coast.

#### SMALL-POX AT HALIFAX.

MR. HOPWOOD (Lancashire, S.E., Middleton): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether his attention has been called to a statement in the *Manchester Courier* of 16th February, that an outbreak of small-pox has occurred amongst the soldiers at Halifax Barracks; and that, on being detected, the men were at once removed to the hospital, and that since Saturday the soldiers generally have been confined to barracks; whether all the soldiers had been once or twice or more times vaccinated; and whether he is advised by the medical authorities that re-vaccination is a sure protection against small-pox?

\*MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: Five Militiamen at Halifax were attacked with small-pox, and were removed to civil hospitals. The troops were confined to barracks for three days after the outbreak. None of the men

attacked had been re-vaccinated. I am advised by the medical authorities that, in their opinion, vaccination or re-vaccination is amply proved by statistics to be a valuable preventive to small-pox, and when the disease does occur it modifies its severity and reduces the mortality in a marked degree.

**MR. HOPWOOD :** May I ask my right hon. Friend if he is prepared to say that vaccination is a sure protection against small-pox ?

**MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN :** I am not an authority on small-pox and vaccination. I merely quote the opinions expressed to me by my medical advisers.

#### THE ILORIN TRIBE.

**MR. LAWRENCE :** I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies whether it is correct as reported that the Ilorin Tribe, after inviting Governor Carter, of Lagos, to visit them, has refused to receive him ; whether there is any reason to think this change of policy is due to any action of the Niger Company ; and whether the Governments of Lagos and of the Oil Rivers District are satisfied with the action of the Royal Niger Company in its dealings with the tribes which dwell on the confines of their districts ?

**MR. S. BUXTON :** We have received no information either in corroboration or contradiction of the paragraph which has appeared in the newspapers. Even if any change of feeling on the part of the Ilorin chiefs has unfortunately occurred, Her Majesty's Government have no reason to suppose that it is in any way to be attributed to any action on the part of the Royal Niger Company. As a matter of fact, the Company strongly repudiate the insinuation contained in the telegram ; and state that they not only have no objection to the Governor's visit, but believe that it will tend to confirm and strengthen their influence in Ilorin, which is within their sphere of operations. Her Majesty's Government have received no complaints from the Lagos Government against any proceedings of the Royal Niger Company in relation to the border tribes. The Oil Rivers District is under the Foreign Office.

*Mr. Campbell-Bannerman*

#### OULART PETTY SESSIONS.

**MR. THOMAS HEALY (Wexford, N.) :** I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland if he is aware that a great part of the business at the last Petty Sessions at Oulart, in the County of Wexford, had to be adjourned owing to the attendance of only one Magistrate, and that a recent Petty Sessions at Newtownbarry, in the same county, had also to be adjourned for the same reason ; and whether the Lord Chancellor will consider the advisability of appointing gentlemen in the County of Wexford as Magistrates who are fully qualified and who will give a regular attendance at Petty Sessions ?

**\*MR. J. MORLEY :** I am informed that the facts are substantially as stated in the first paragraph of the question. It appears, however, that two of the Magistrates who usually attend the Oulart Petty Sessions were ill and could not, therefore, be present on the occasion. No doubt the Lord Chancellor will give the matter his attention.

#### BANKRUPTCY FEES.

**MR. WEIR (Ross and Cromarty) :** I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he is aware that until recently an employee in the office of the Official Receiver, 33, Carey Street, claimed fees for administering oaths to persons calling at the office in connection with the business of the Department ; and whether the appropriation of fees by an employee is in accordance with the Rules of the Service ?

**MR. MUNDELLA :** I am aware of the circumstances. The employee in question, who is not a permanent Civil Servant, but holds a position on the personal staff of the Official Receiver, is a solicitor, and as such holds a Commission to administer oaths in the High Court of Justice. The fees in question are not fees due to the Department or payable in respect of official services, but are personal fees, payable to such Commissioners. The practice in question has, however, been discontinued, the Lord Chancellor having made arrangements by which proofs of debt under the Companies (Winding-up) Act can be sworn free of charge by officers of the Official Receiver's Department.

## TELEGRAPHIC DELAYS.

MR. WEIR : I beg to ask the Postmaster General why no information can be obtained from the Department in reply to inquiries as to the cause of delay (2 hours 7 minutes) in the transmission of a telegram from Balallan, Plockton, Ross-shire, to London on the 2nd ultimo, and of a telegram from London to Balallan, Plockton, Ross-shire, delayed 1½ hours at Inverness on the 4th ultimo ?

THE POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. A. MORLEY, Nottingham, E.) : The first telegram mentioned in the question is probably one which was handed in on the 31st January, and not on the 2nd February, and was mentioned in the hon. Member's letter of the 2nd February, addressed to the Secretary of the Post Office. It contained 69 words and had to pass through six offices. Its transmission occupied *one* hour and seven minutes, not *two* hours and seven minutes as stated in the question, and I do not think that the time was unduly long. The second telegram was sent on the 4th ultimo. It was addressed "Balallan, Plockton, Stromeferry," and was written on the same form as one addressed "Balallan, Stromeferry." I ought to have pointed out that there is a telegraph office at Plockton, but unfortunately this was not done. When the telegram reached Inverness the mistake was noticed and delay occurred before the matter could be put right by reference to the hon. Member who had not paid the full amount for the two messages. No unnecessary delay has taken place in discovering the exact facts.

\*MR. WEIR : I will place the telegrams in the hands of the right hon. Gentleman, and he will see that I am right, and that his statements are absolutely inaccurate.

## PUBLIC WORKS IN THE HIGHLANDS.

MR. WEIR : I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland if he will state what amount of the £40,000 granted last year under "The Highlands and Islands (Scotland) Works Act, 1891," has been expended to date ; and whether he will insist upon the Department created under this Act spending the whole of the grant upon useful works before the close of the financial year ?

SIR G. TREVELYAN : There has been expended up to date about £16,500, and the total expenditure up to the end of this month is estimated at about £24,000. I have explained to the House, in answer to previous questions, that great delay took place owing to the formalities required under the Highland and Islands Works Act ; and that, at the point where several important schemes—such, for instance, as Portness Harbour, and Carloway Road and Carloway Harbour—have at present arrived the matter lies, not with the Department, but with the Local Authorities and the contractors whom they employ.

## MAGISTRATES IN ROSS AND CROMARTY.

MR. WEIR : I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland whether he is aware that, upon the recommendation of the Lord Lieutenant of Ross and Cromarty, several persons have been appointed to act as Justices of the Peace in contravention of the Law of Scotland ; and whether, if so, steps will be taken to have the names of these persons struck off the Roll of Justices of the Peace, and to promote the appointment of persons who permanently reside in the county ?

SIR G. TREVELYAN : The Secretary for Scotland has no voice nor responsibility in the nomination of Justices of the Peace, or in their removal. But if the hon. Member is aware of appointments having been illegally made, and will lay the facts before me in a letter, I will inquire into the circumstances, and, if necessary, communicate them to the Lord Chancellor.

## PUBLIC WORKS LOANS IN IRELAND.

MR. JACKSON : I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury what is the total amount outstanding of loans made by the Commissioners of Public Works (Ireland), and whether he can state the amount of principal, and of interest, separately ?

SIR J. T. HIBBERT : The amounts outstanding on loans (including those made out of the Church Fund) made by the Commissioners of Public Works (Ireland) are at the present time approximately as follows :—Principal, £8,643,000 ; interest, £255,000 ; total, £8,898,000.



MR. SEXTON (Kerry, N.): Has any inquiry or calculation been made by the Treasury as to the proportion of this total sum which may be held to be irrecoverable?

SIR J. T. HIBBERT: I cannot say.

MR. SEXTON: In view of the very close scrutiny which is likely to be applied to this matter in forthcoming Debates I hope the right hon. Gentleman will get the information as soon as possible.

SIR J. T. HIBBERT: Certainly.

#### NATIONAL EMBLEMS.

MR. MAC NEILL (Donegal, S.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether officers, non-commissioned officers, and soldiers in Her Majesty's Forces will be permitted while in uniform to wear the shamrock on St. Patrick's Day?

\*MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: Instructions have recently been issued—I hope they were in time for St. David's Day yesterday—enabling commanding officers to use their discretion with regard to permitting the use of national emblems on special days.

#### TRIAL BY JURY IN BOMBAY.

MR. PAUL (Edinburgh, S.): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India whether the Bengal Jury Commission has power to report that the notification of Sir Charles Elliott, restricting the right to trial by jury, be rescinded; and whether, if the Commission should so report, the notification will be rescinded accordingly?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA (MR. GEORGE RUSSELL, North Beds.): The Commission will have power to deal with the whole question, including, of course, the notification to which my hon. Friend refers. The Secretary of State cannot make any statement as to the action which will be taken on the Report until it has been received and considered.

MR. PAUL: May I make an appeal to the Secretary of State through the Under Secretary? Considering the enormous gravity of the issue involved—[*Cries of "Order!"*]

\*MR. SPEAKER: Order! The hon. Member is not putting a question.

MR. PAUL: I was about to lay the foundation for one. Will the Secretary of State consider the desirability to coming to an immediate decision on this question, which is exciting such intense interest and agitation throughout Bengal?

MR. GEORGE RUSSELL: It is obvious the Secretary of State must see the Report before he can come to a decision upon it.

#### FISHING DISASTER IN THE MORAY FIRTH.

DR. CLARK (Caithness): I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland whether he is aware that in consequence of a storm on Tuesday evening the fishing fleet north of the Moray Firth was scattered, some of the fishing boats having foundered with loss of all on board, and others missing; whether the gunboat on the station did nothing to assist the fleet, and only, began to act after receiving telegrams from the Convener of the County of Caithness and the Provost of Wick; and whether he will explain on what grounds, when the gunboat came to Wick on Sunday to assist in the search for the missing boats, the commander refused the aid of the local fishermen to assist him in the search?

SIR G. TREVELYAN: In reply to the hon. Member, I am informed that the *Watchful* gunboat arrived at Cromarty on the 14th instant (Tuesday) passing several boats making for Cromarty in no distress. On the 18th the commanding officer of the *Watchful* received a telegram from the Provost of Wick saying one was missing, and he sailed immediately in search. The *Watchful* reached Wick on the 19th; fishermen came off and directed the commanding officer in which way to search. He acted on their directions; but unfortunately could find nothing. This intelligence comes through the Admiralty, and is confirmed by independent telegrams from the Fishery Board.

DR. CLARK: I beg to give notice that on either the Naval Estimates or that for the Fishery Board I shall move the reduction of the salary of the captain of the *Watchful*.

## THE INVERNESS-SHIRE MAGISTRACY.

**DR. MACGREGOR** (Inverness-shire): I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland, considering that under the present system of nomination by the Lord Lieutenant there are now in Inverness-shire out of 190 Justices of the Peace not more than six representing the Liberal Party, will the Government make such arrangements as will place these appointments in the hands of some other Body, say the County Council, in order to redress this great disparity between Parties?

**SIR G. TREVELYAN**: The Lord Chancellor, whom I have consulted on the subject, was not aware of the relative proportion of the Political Parties on the Bench in Inverness-shire, but he has the matter under his consideration.

\***MR. DARLING** (Deptford): Will the right hon. Gentleman at the same time consider the propriety of so preserving the proportion that the ratio as to Magistrates may represent that of the political opinions of the prisoners with whom they have to deal?

[No answer was given.]

## NAVAL OFFICERS' LEAVE.

**MR. GIBSON BOWLES** (Lynn Regis): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty, in view of the fact that naval officers employed at home are allowed six weeks' leave each year, while naval officers serving abroad are allowed two weeks' leave for each year of foreign service, and that the latter category of naval officers on their return from foreign service are often deprived of part or of the whole of the accumulated leave then due to them, whether he is prepared to sanction such a change in the Regulations as would enable officers so deprived of their leave, to take it at some later time, instead of its being, as at present, wiped off altogether?

**THE CIVIL LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY** (Mr. E. ROBERTSON, Dundee): It is only in very rare cases that it is necessary to withhold the leave which has accumulated during foreign service, and when this happens it is for strong Service reasons. It is not proposed to alter the practice heretofore followed.

## PROMOTION IN THE NAVY.

**MR. GIBSON BOWLES**: I beg to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty whether the Admiralty will consider the advisability of encouraging the promotion of deserving and capable warrant officers in the Navy from lower deck rank to commissioned rank in the superior grades of lieutenant or upwards, on their passing a proper test examination, in order to give a stimulus to such officers, and to add to the insufficient inducements now held out to youths of superior talents and abilities to join the Service as blue-jackets?

**MR. E. ROBERTSON**: Warrant officers are already promoted to commissioned rank as chief gunners, chief boatswains, and chief carpenters, and the Regulations give power for further promotion in the case of officers who may distinguish themselves by acts of daring and gallantry in the Service.

\***MR. GIBSON BOWLES**: Are promotions given for any other merit than acts of daring and gallantry?

**MR. E. ROBERTSON**: I must ask for notice of that question.

## NAVAL PENSIONS.

**MR. GIBSON BOWLES**: I beg to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty, in view of the fact that first-class men of the Royal Naval Reserve, when they finish their term of service in the Reserve, do not at once receive their pension, but have to wait for it till they attain the age of 60, and that many of them die before attaining that age, and thus lose their pension altogether, whether it would not be possible, on such men ending their service in the Reserve, to give them a pension to commence then and there, and thus to add to the inducements to enter the Reserve?

**MR. E. ROBERTSON**: No, Sir; it is not proposed to make any such change in the conditions of service of the first class of the Royal Naval Reserve.

## OFFICIAL NEWSPAPERS.

**CAPTAIN NORTON** (Newington, W.): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies whether his attention has been called to a number of attacks upon the Prime Minister in *The Gibraltar Chronicle and Official Gazette*; whether he is aware that

this is the official organ of the colony ; and whether the Colonial Office will take any steps to deal with the matter ?

MR. S. BUXTON : The attention of the Secretary of State has been called to the matter referred to. In an ordinary newspaper the paragraphs in question would have called for no remark. But it is distinctly improper that Party and personal attacks of this nature should appear in a newspaper which is designated the *Official Gazette*, and in which appear all official notifications, &c. The question of the continuance of *The Gibraltar Chronicle* as the medium of issuing public notices is under consideration.

#### LAWLESSNESS IN COUNTY CLARE.

MR. T. W. RUSSELL : I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether his attention has been called to the observations of Mr. Justice O'Brien at the opening of the Munster Assizes on Monday last, to the effect that the picture which the Constabulary Returns made presented to his mind a condition of lawlessness in the County Clare far exceeding in amount that which came under his experience in past times ; that there was no security for life in the County of Clare, and that property was not more secure than life ; and if, in view of this statement by the Judge of Assize, he proposes to take any steps to assert the supremacy of the law and to render life and property secure in that part of Her Majesty's dominions ?

MR. W. REDMOND (Clare, E.) : Before the right hon. Gentleman answers that may I be permitted to ask him whether his attention has been called to that portion of Mr. Justice O'Brien's address in which he says that the number of crimes reported for the corresponding period of last year is slightly greater than the number reported this year ; and whether, speaking of the state of the county, the learned Judge said—

"It would not be accurate to attribute it to any change that had been recently made affecting the administration of the law ?"

MR. W. KENNY (Dublin, St. Stephen's Green) : May I ask whether the right hon. Gentleman has received any official Report of the observations of the same learned Judge at the conclusion of the Clare Assizes yesterday ; and, if

not, whether his attention has been called to the report of the observations as they appear in *The Daily News* of to-day ?

MR. SEXTON : With regard to the last question, I will ask the right hon. Gentleman whether the speech delivered on the previous day by Mr. Justice O'Brien was in any sense a judicial utterance, a charge to the Grand Jury or to the Petty Jury, or whether it was a general public speech from the Bench ?

\*MR. J. MORLEY : In reference to the remarks of Mr. Justice O'Brien yesterday, I have only had an opportunity of reading one very short report of them, and I should say that, judging from that report, whatever else it was, it was not a judicial utterance. I will take means to get an authentic Report, and will go through it. In reference to the question on the Paper, my attention was of course drawn to the remarks of Mr. Justice O'Brien in charging the Grand Jury. The first report I saw was a report in *The Times* newspaper, and a garbled report. The learned Judge did qualify his words as my hon. Friend the Member for Clare has just read to the House. He said that—

"The number of recorded cases is slightly less than that of the corresponding period of last year."

So far as my information leads me to know, the total crime is distributed nearly equally over the whole period of the year. The late Government were in Office till the middle of August ; the present Government came in on 22nd August. The learned Judge did not attribute the condition of the crime to any change that has recently been made. Now, Sir, it will perhaps save the time of the House if in answer to this question I make a somewhat long statement. This is not the first time within the last two or three years that the Judges in charging the Grand Juries in County Clare have had occasion to make remarks on the unfortunate condition of affairs in that county. At the Summer Assizes in July, 1892, Mr. Justice O'Brien made some strong references to the state of the county, and amongst other things he said—

"Unhappily, the County of Clare retains its bad eminence or pre-eminence in Ireland, and, though the latest to receive, it has been the longest to retain, the dangerous impressions and evil influences which have existed for some time in the country."

He remarks upon the increase of intimidation, especially in the form of threatening letters, and also on the prevalence of incendiary fires. At the previous Spring Assizes in March, 1892, Lord Justice FitzGibbon reported the continued bad state of County Clare, there being an increase in the number of specially reported cases. At the Spring Assizes in March, 1891, Lord Chief Justice O'Brien remarked that the Calendar before him presented a melancholy picture of crime. He found that crime had not diminished, and that in several classes of crime there had been, unhappily, a sensible increase. This was the first occasion on which Judges have commented on the state of the county. In reference to the remarks of Mr. Justice O'Brien the other day, and his allegation that there was a condition of lawlessness in the County of Clare far exceeding in amount that which came under his experience in times past, it is hardly borne out by the facts. One hundred and seventeen cases were specially reported since the Spring of 1892 as against 124 cases in the corresponding period of the preceding year—that is to say, a reduction of seven cases since the previous Spring Assize. There has been a decrease not only in the number of cases, but also in the more serious classes of crime. At the Spring Assize of 1892 there was no murder case as against two in 1891. There were 13 cases of arson at the last Spring Assizes against 9 this year, and 13 cases of cattle maiming against 5—a decrease under each head. In minor offences the number was 2,338 as against 2,439, a decrease of 101 cases. The state of the county, bad as it is, is not so bad, if we may judge from these Reports, as when the late Government last reduced the police force and revoked the Proclamation under the Crimes Act. I am extremely unwilling to give anything like a recriminatory character to so serious a subject, but I am bound to say so much of the comparative part of the learned Judge's remarks. I am fully alive, as the House hardly needs to be assured, to the hateful demoralisation that prevails now, as it has for years past prevailed, in some portions of the County of Clare. In answer to the last portion of the hon. Gentleman's question, I have only to say that I have had frequent and direct communication with the

responsible officers on the spot, more than one important change in police administration has been made, and no effort is being spared to reduce the present state of demoralisation and lawlessness. The hon. Member and the House will understand that it would not be convenient or conformable with practice to state more particularly the special measures under consideration. I may say, however, that probably among them will be the restoration of the extra police force which the late Government thought it right, perhaps prematurely, to withdraw last year.

\*MR. ARNOLD-FORSTER (Belfast, W.): Will the right hon. Gentleman tell us whether Mr. Justice O'Brien did or did not state that the lives and property of Her Majesty's subjects in County Clare are not safe? Are we to understand that that is accurate or inaccurate, as a matter of fact?

MR. J. MORLEY: I think it is true that life and property in the County of Clare are not so safe, unfortunately, as in most other parts of Ireland and in England; but, as the hon. Member well knows, the explanation is to be found in the social circumstances of the last few years.

MR. ARNOLD-FORSTER: May I ask whether, in referring to the statement of the learned Judge as not judicial, the right hon. Gentleman meant to impugn its accuracy?

[No answer was given.]

MR. COHEN (Islington, E.): May I ask the right hon. Gentleman whether he will be good enough to explain in what respect the subsequent Report of the learned Judge's remarks differs from the report in *The Times*, which he informed the House was garbled?

\*MR. J. MORLEY: Surely the hon. Gentleman has noticed that *The Times* omitted that portion which entirely relieved the present change of administration from responsibility.

MR. T. M. HEALY: Is not County Clare the county in which Head Constable Michael O'Halloran, with the approval of the present Leader of the Opposition when Chief Secretary for Ireland, gave a £10 note to an alleged member of a secret society with a view to get up an outrage?

**Mr. CARSON** (Dublin University): May I ask in how many of the 117 reported cases the offender have been brought to conviction?

**Mr. J. REDMOND** (Waterford): May I ask the right hon. Gentleman whether he will be good enough to give the figures with reference to the number of convictions in previous years? I think he will find that the average is about the same.

\***Mr. J. MORLEY**: I have not by me the figures of previous years, and it would be travelling rather wide on the present question to give them; but I am quite prepared, if any hon. Member will put a question to me, to state what they were.

**Mr. W. REDMOND**: In reference to the statement made by Mr. Justice O'Brien that life and property are insecure in County Kerry, is it not the fact that during the last year no life has been lost by violence in County Clare, and that, so far from property being insecure, rents are generally well paid in County Clare, and no attacks have been made upon property; and whether it was not a well-known fact that crime and disturbance in the County of Clare was on a much larger scale when the right hon. Gentleman who now leads the Opposition held the office of Chief Secretary.

**Mr. J. MORLEY**: I can only say that the hon. Gentleman is quite right in the implication that the crime in County Clare is not at present marked by any agrarian features. It is not agrarian crime.

**Mr. W. REDMOND**: May I ask the right hon. Gentleman whether he will always bear in mind, with reference to questions such as that put by the hon. Member for South Tyrone, that the people of the County of Clare are strongly opposed to the Party of the hon. Gentleman?

\***Mr. SPEAKER**: That is hardly a fair question to put.

**Mr. W. REDMOND**: I will put it in another form, Mr. Speaker. I will ask whether it is not the fact that systematic attempts have been made to blacken the character of the people of this county?

**Mr. MACARTNEY** (Antrim, S.): As the right hon. Gentleman is contemplating the restoration of the extra police force, will he take into his consideration the necessity of restoring the provisions of the Criminal Law Amendment Act?

\***Mr. J. MORLEY**: If the hon. Member will show me that that Act puts down crime in Clare, I will consider the necessity of its restoration.

**Mr. MACARTNEY**: I would ask the right hon. Gentleman whether he will consult the officials responsible for the good order of the county?

\***Mr. J. MORLEY**: The Reports of the County Inspectors are confidential, and I have no intention of communicating them to the hon. Member or to anybody else.

**Mr. MACARTNEY**: That is not my question. I think that the right hon. Gentleman misinterpreted the purview of the question. I asked him whether he would consult the constabulary officials and Resident Magistrates of Clare with a view to putting into force again the Criminal Law Amendment Act? Will he get their opinion as to what the effect of that would be in securing the peace of the county?

**Mr. SEXTON**: As to the question of the efficiency or inefficiency of the law in County Clare, I would ask the right hon. Gentleman to take a better test—namely, the constabulary and judicial records. I would ask whether there is any assumption to be gained from those records that the Coercion Act has either increased the proportion of indictments to crime or the proportion of convictions to indictments?

\***Mr. J. MORLEY**: I think that I have shown that the operation of the Crimes Act in Clare did not materially increase the number of convictions, and that the Four Courts of Secret Inquiry proved completely inoperative. No single person was by them made amenable to the law.

**Mr. W. REDMOND**: In connection with what has taken place now, I desire to give notice that, should any attempt be made to place this county under the Coercion Act, I shall oppose it as strongly as I can.

#### CLASSIFICATION IN HER MAJESTY'S DOCKYARDS.

**Mr. KNATCHBULL-HUGESSEN** (Kent, Faversham): I beg to ask the Civil Lord of the Admiralty whether he is now able to state the decision of the Board of Admiralty with respect to the system of classification in Her Majesty's Dockyards?

MR. EDMUND ROBERTSON :

As I stated in my reply to the hon. Member for Devonport on the 2nd February, the matter is receiving the very careful consideration of the Admiralty, and it is hoped a statement may be made at an early date.

#### POSTAL COMMUNICATION WITH ALDERNEY.

MR. HENNIKER HEATON (Canterbury) : I beg to ask the Postmaster General whether his attention has been called to the fact that there is no direct mail communication between England and Alderney, which is a military station, and is the nearest of the Channel Islands to both England and France ; whether it is true that a letter posted in London after 9 p.m. on a Monday would only be delivered in Alderney on the following Saturday, the distance by sea being 49 miles from the island to Portland ; whether the Deputy Inspector General of Mails, about 18 months ago, informed a deputation on the subject that "the best would be done to secure for the people of Alderney a direct mail service to England" ; and whether, in view of the fact that British mailboats daily pass and repass the island without stopping to deliver mails, anything has been or is about to be done in fulfilment of that undertaking ?

MR. A. MORLEY : This subject has received careful consideration, but no arrangement is practicable for affording a direct mail between England and Alderney. A letter posted in time for the night mail from London of Monday would be delivered at Alderney on Tuesday. If posted too late for Monday's mail, it would be despatched to Guernsey on Tuesday night, and would now be delivered at Alderney on Saturday, the postal service to Alderney during the winter being on Tuesdays and Saturdays. The deputation referred to were informed that the Department would be glad to arrange a better service within the limit of the present expenditure, which is very large as compared with the revenue from the letters, but no expectation was held out of a direct service with England. The matter shall not be lost sight of.

#### HEMP DRUGS IN BENGAL.

MR. CAINE (Bradford, E.) : I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India if the Secretary of State for India will instruct the Government of India to create a Commission of Experts to inquire into, and report upon, the cultivation of, and trade in, all preparations of hemp drugs in Bengal, the effect of their consumption upon the social and moral condition of the people, and the desirability of prohibiting its growth and sale ; such Commission also to invite written Reports on the same from all Commissioners in the other Provinces of British India ; and that the Commission shall be partly composed of non-official natives of India ?

MR. GEORGE RUSSELL : The Secretary of State proposes to request the Viceroy to appoint a Commission to inquire into the cultivation and trade in hemp drugs, and he will be glad if the result of their inquiry is to show that further restrictions can be placed upon the sale and consumption of these drugs. The Commission will be composed, in part, of non-official natives of India. The Secretary of State will give instructions to ensure that the inquiry shall be as thorough and complete as possible ; but he does not consider it desirable to interfere with the discretion of the Commission as to the methods of procedure which they may think best to adopt.

MR. CAINE : In consequence of the answer given, I beg to give notice, on behalf of the Member for North Manchester (Mr. Schwann), that he will not move the Resolution which stands first on the Order Book for to-morrow. That will facilitate the discussion of the question of railway rates.

SIR J. GORST (Cambridge University) : Will the question of opium be considered by the Commission ?

MR. GEORGE RUSSELL : No ; the subject, however, is receiving the attention of the Secretary of State.

#### UNIVERSAL SUFFRAGE.

MR. CAINE : I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs if he will ask the Embassy at Brussels to report upon the recent *Referendum* vote upon universal suffrage, the methods by which it was taken, and its cost ; and if he will issue the Report as a Foreign Office Paper ?

\***SIR E. GREY** : The Report will be called for and laid on the Table as a Parliamentary Paper.

#### GLANDERS AND FARCY IN LONDON.

**MR. EDWARD H. BAYLEY** (Camberwell, N.) : I beg to ask the President of the Board of Agriculture whether, in view of the alarming increase of glanders and farcy in London, upwards of 2,000 cases having occurred in 1892, being 90 per cent. of the cases in the country generally, and the fact that glanders and farcy are contagious as regards human beings as well as horses, he will take measures to stamp out the disease by means of a system of inspection of stables and compulsory slaughter of infected horses, with or without compensation of owners ?

**THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF AGRICULTURE** (Mr. GARDNER, Essex, Saffron Walden) : As the hon. Member is aware, I issued an Order dealing generally with the subject of glanders and farcy in September last. Under that Order vigorous measures are being taken by the London County Council, assisted by the police, to ensure notification, slaughter, destruction of carcases, and the prevention of the spread of the disease, and I am happy to say that the number of outbreaks recorded since the commencement of the present year is less than in the corresponding period of 1892. There is no cause whatever for alarm on the subject, but I am carefully watching the operation of the new Order with a view to determine whether any further action on my part is necessary.

#### THE REGISTRATION BILL.

**MR. HENRY HOBHOUSE** (Somerset, E.) : I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board whether he proposes to take the Second Reading of the Registration of Electors (Amendment) Bill before Easter ; and whether his intention still is to ask the House to refer a measure which contains important clauses, altering the Parliamentary franchise, to a Grand Committee ?

**MR. H. H. FOWLER** : My answer to both questions is in the affirmative.

#### PENSIONS IN IRELAND.

**MR. WHITMORE** (Chelsea) : I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether, before the Second Reading of the Government of Ireland Bill, he will lay upon the Table of the House the Regulations as to gratuities and pensions for Civil servants, and the Regulations as to gratuities and pensions for the Royal Irish Constabulary and Dublin Metropolitan Police, which are at present omitted from the 5th and 6th Schedules of the Bill ?

\***MR. J. MORLEY** : I hope to be able to place these Papers on the Table of the House before the Second Reading of the Government of Ireland Bill.

#### THE ENFIELD SMALL ARMS FACTORY.

**CAPTAIN BOWLES** (Middlesex, Enfield) : I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War how many discharges have taken place from the Enfield Small Arms Factory during the last month ; and whether it is contemplated making any further reductions in the number of hands employed ?

**THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY TO THE WAR OFFICE** (Mr. WOODALL, Hanley) : Sixty-one men have been discharged from the Small Arms Factory at Enfield during February ; and it is feared further reduction in the amount of labour will have to be made, not only in Enfield, but in other Government establishments.

#### BALTIMORE RAILWAY PIER.

**MR. W. REDMOND** (for Mr. FIELD, Dublin, St. Patrick) : I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether the Congested Districts Board (Ireland) have had under consideration any scheme for the erection of a suitable pier in connection with the Baltimore Railway ; and, if so, whether they have come to any decision on the matter ; and whether any surplus remains of the sum granted by the Treasury for the construction of the Baltimore Extension Railway ; and, if so, whether he will take steps to secure that such surplus shall be used to aid in the erection of the pier ?

**SIR J. T. HIBBERT:** The Chief Secretary informs me that the Congested Districts Board have had under consideration a proposal for the extension of the pier at Baltimore in connection with the railway, but have not yet come to any decision on the matter. I am informed that there is no surplus under the Light Railways Act of 1889, and, even if there were, it would not be applicable to the erection of a pier.

#### NON-AGRARIAN OFFENCES IN CLARE.

**MR. MACARTNEY** (Antrim, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland what was the number of the non-agrarian offences committed in the County of Clare for the quarter ending the 31st December, 1892?

**\*MR. J. MORLEY:** The Inspector General reports that the number of non-agrarian outrages reported in Clare for the three months ended December 31, 1892, was 30, of which nine were threatening notices.

**MR. T. M. HEALY:** Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that large tracts of County Clare have been, by the decision of the Court of Appeal in Ireland, excluded from the operations of the Land Act, and that it is in regard to this that the troubles arise?

[No answer was given.]

#### PORTNESS HARBOUR.

**MR. WEIR** (Ross and Cromarty): I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland whether he will cause inquiries to be made into the dangerous condition of the harbour at Portness, Island of Lewis, and take steps to have the alterations pushed forward more speedily than hitherto?

**SIR G. TREVELYAN:** The faults of the Portness Harbour are its tendency to silt up and the difficulty of entering during rough weather. The Treasury under the late Government sanctioned £15,000 to build a breakwater and remedy these defects. For six months the Harbour Trustees have been trying in vain to find a contractor to take up the work. Now their engineer recommends that it should be carried out by daily labour, and the matter is under the consideration of the Trustees.

#### THE EVICTED TENANTS COMMISSION.

**MR. BARTLEY** (Islington, N.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland when the Report of the Evicted Tenants Commission will be in the hands of Members?

**\*MR. J. MORLEY:** The Report of the Commission was officially submitted by the Commissioners to the Lord Lieutenant on Saturday last. The printers have promised to complete the printing of the evidence within the next few days, and, upon its receipt, steps will forthwith be taken to lay both the Report and evidence on the Table of the House?

**MR. BARTLEY:** May we rely upon having it early next week?

**MR. J. MORLEY:** I should think so.

#### SECONDARY EDUCATION IN SCOTLAND.

**MR. PARKER SMITH** (Lanark, Partick): I wish to ask the Secretary for Scotland whether he will lay on the Table of the House the Circular which he proposes to issue to the County and Burgh Committees in Scotland, in regard to secondary education?

**SIR G. TREVELYAN:** The Circular shall be laid on the Table of the House. It will be despatched to the Committees at latest to-morrow.

#### RATES FOR THE CARRIAGE OF MILK TO HAWICK.

**MR. THOMAS SHAW** (Hawick, &c.): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether his attention has been called to the action of the London and North-Western and North British Railway Companies, with reference to the rates for the carriage of milk from Plumpton Station to Hawick, whereby the charges have been raised from 1d. per gallon to 10½d. per gallon, being a figure 2½d. per gallon in excess of the price of the milk, and so exorbitant as to threaten the immediate stoppage of the milk supply of Hawick from Plumpton and district; and whether he will make such representations to the Railway Companies as will bring about the abandonment of the new and oppressive charges and the resumption of the former rate?



MR. MUNDELLA : I have been in communication with the London and North-Western Railway Company on the subject referred to by the hon. Member. There can be no doubt that this extraordinary charge was made, but I am happy to be able to state that a rate of 1d. per gallon has now been adopted for the traffic in milk from Plumpton to Hawick, which will be applied retrospectively to the traffic that has been passing latterly.

#### CAPTAIN HASTINGS AND THE ADMIRALTY.

MR. HANBURY (Preston) : I beg to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty what precedents exist for the entire reversal by the Admiralty of the decisions of duly-constituted Courts Martial; whether a prisoner, who has been fully acquitted after formal trial by a Court Martial, is liable to be informally re-tried and condemned on the same charge by the Lords Commissioners; whether the Court which tried and acquitted Captain Hastings attributed the accident wholly to the imperfection of the Admiralty Chart; and whether the Board of Admiralty alleged that the Circular Letter of April 14, 1892, and the instructions given in *Notes on Navigation*, ed. 1892, to which they referred in their recent Minute, were not within the knowledge of the Court Martial when they gave their verdict?

\*SIR U. KAY-SHUTTLEWORTH : In answer to my hon. Friend's first and second questions, there are precedents for the course taken by the Admiralty, notably that of the acquittal, in 1862, of Captain Sotheby for the loss of the *Conqueror*, and his subsequent censure by Minute of the Board. While not accepting the description in these questions of the action taken by the present Board, they are satisfied that what they have done has been perfectly regular, as well as just. To the third question I have to answer Yes; it is so stated in the Admiralty Minute. The Board of Admiralty allege nothing of the kind stated in the fourth question. They simply take the opportunity to call the attention of the Fleet to the Circular Letter, and to the instructions, with a view to doing all in the power of the Admiralty to avert further mishaps.

MR. HANBURY : I beg to give notice that I will call attention to the Admiralty Minute when the Navy Estimates are under discussion.

#### PROMOTIONS FROM THE RANKS.

MR. HANBURY : I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War what is the total amount paid to soldiers risen from the ranks for outfit allowances during the last 10 years; in how many cases during that period has the option of earlier promotion to commissioned rank, on condition of foregoing the outfit allowance, been offered before the outfit allowance for the year had been exhausted; how many men risen from the ranks have been promoted to commissioned rank during that period with or without the grant of outfit allowances respectively; and, how many of those so promoted without outfit allowance belonged to the same class of society as those who attained commissions by examination?

\*MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN : As regards the actual amount paid as outfit allowance to soldiers risen from the ranks during the last 10 years, I shall be happy to give the hon. Member a Return if he will move for it, and also of the total number promoted from the ranks. Since the practice commenced in 1886 of promoting warrant or non-commissioned officers without the outfit allowance, it has been customary, on noting a candidate, to ascertain, without reference to the number of allowances unappropriated at the time, if he would be willing to forego the allowance in order that his promotion might not be delayed. The outfit allowance is given as a matter of course in every case of promotion to a commission as riding-master or quartermaster, or as district officer of Artillery, or officer of the coast battalion of Engineers. It is only in the cases of promotion to commissions in the Cavalry or Infantry that the question of foregoing the outfit allowance can arise. Out of 197 such promotions during the last 10 years, 117 have had the allowance and 80 have not. No inquiry as to the social status of a candidate is made beyond the fact that a commanding officer is bound to satisfy himself that the candidate is in all respects qualified for the position of a commissioned officer.

## RAILWAY RATES IN IRELAND.

**COLONEL NOLAN** (Galway, N.): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he is aware that the Midland and Great Western Railway Company of Ireland has lately raised some of its charges for freight from 20 to 120 per cent.; if the principal distiller in Galway is now for the first time preparing to send his goods by sea owing to the high railway rates; and if Galway buyers are now being deterred by the rates from purchasing agricultural produce in Ballinasloe; and if he will bring in a Bill to regulate excessive freights by Railway Companies holding a monopoly of the inland carrying trade?

**MR. MUNDELLA**: I have received several complaints of the rates charged by the Midland and Great Western Railway Company of Ireland, and I am in communication with the Company, through the Railway Association, on the subject. I am not able to say what action it will be necessary for me to take until I see the result of the negotiations which are now being daily conducted. I have no information on the second portion of the hon. and gallant Member's question.

**COLONEL NOLAN** asked if the right hon. Gentleman could say when he would be likely to know what action could be taken—in a week or a month?

**MR. MUNDELLA**: If the hon. and gallant Gentleman will address to me a specific complaint, I will, in a very short time, give him a specific answer; but I cannot say what action will be taken on the general complaint as to railway rates. The Companies must be allowed time for revision.

**COLONEL NOLAN** said he had named the railway and the percentage of rise. He had obtained his information from a meeting of traders. They wanted some specific answer to their complaint.

**MR. MUNDELLA** said that if the hon. and gallant Member would give any specific instance of goods carried by the railway in question at advanced rates, he would ask the Company to explain the increase. He could not do it on a general statement.

## SCREENING OF SIDE-LIGHTS.

**MR. GIBSON BOWLES** (Lynn Regis): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he has now received a document, dated 31st January, 1893, signed by 143 Trinity House pilots of the Port of London, protesting against the new system of so screening ships' side-lights as to make them squint across the ship's bow, as being misleading and dangerous; whether he has received a letter, dated 14th February, 1893, from the Liverpool Steamship Owners' Association, objecting to the new system, and urging the suspension of the Order in Council until the concurrence of Foreign Powers has been obtained; whether he has received a communication, also objecting to the new system, from the Chamber of Shipping of the United Kingdom; whether he is aware of the consensus of opinion adverse to the new system expressed by the organs in the Press of the shipping interests; and whether, under these circumstances, he still adheres to his determination not to re-consider or suspend the operation of the Order in Council whereby the new system is imposed?

**MR. MUNDELLA**: I have received the communications from the Liverpool Steamship Owners' Association and the Chamber of Shipping, together with what purports to be a copy of the document signed by the pilots. I cannot undertake to estimate the extent of Press opinions in the matter. I have seen expressions of opinion both for and against the Order. As already explained by me, in answer to previous questions, the Order in Council makes no new regulation, but interprets existing regulations framed in the interests of safe navigation, and there is no sufficient reason for suspending its operation. The instructions as to screening of side-lights was issued on the 14th August, 1889, since which date it has been generally adopted throughout the British Mercantile Marine. The Order in Council explaining the rule was passed in the interest of British shipowners.

## THE "WARSPITE" COURT MARTIAL.

**MR. GIBSON BOWLES**: I beg to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty whether he has any objection to lay on

the Table of the House the Minutes of the proceedings of the *Warspite* court martial, together with any Admiralty Minute thereon?

\*SIR UGHTRED KAY-SHUTTLEWORTH: It has not been customary, unless in exceptional cases, to lay the Minutes of courts martial on the Table; and unless there is a general desire on the part of Members, the usual course will be followed.

#### THE NEW COINAGE.

MR. PARKER SMITH: I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he will arrange that samples of the new coins shall be on sale to Members at the Post Office before the Coinage Vote in the Supplementary Estimates comes on?

\*THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Sir W. HARCOURT, Derby): I shall see whether arrangements can be made to that effect.

#### SURVEYOR GENERAL FOR SCOTLAND.

MR. PARKER SMITH: I beg to ask the Postmaster General whether it was decided by a Treasury Minute seven years ago to abolish the office of Surveyor General for Scotland; and, if so, whether he will state to the House the contents of that Minute?

MR. A. MORLEY: There is no Treasury Minute on the subject. But in a letter dated the 29th January, 1886, the Treasury concurred in a proposal made by the then Postmaster General that on the retirement of the present Surveyor General the title should be abolished and that of Secretary revived.

MR. PARKER SMITH: I beg to give notice that I shall call attention to this matter at an early date.

#### PUBLICANS' LICENCES.

MR. LODER (Brighton): I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether the Probate Duty on the value of a publican's licence has hitherto been calculated on the full term of his tenure; and, if so, whether, in view of the legislation which he proposes, and of his statement that licences are annually terminable, he will direct that the practice be discontinued, and Probate Duty assessed at one year's value only in future?

*Mr. Gibson Bowles*

\*SIR W. HARCOURT: Yes; I think that is a matter well deserving of consideration. I will communicate with the Inland Revenue on the subject.

#### DISTURBANCE AT BODYKE.

MR. WILLIAM REDMOND: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether his attention has been called to the conflict between the police and people at Bodyke last week, when the sheriff seized some cattle on the estate of Colonel O'Callaghan; whether he can state how many police were engaged upon the occasion, and whether it is true they charged the people with clubbed guns; whether he is aware that the people of Bodyke find great difficulty in paying the judicial rents; and whether, to avoid further disturbance in this locality, the Government will introduce a short Bill for the revision of judicial rents in Ireland?

\*MR. J. MORLEY: I have called for a Report in reference to this question, and not having received a reply must ask the hon. Gentleman to defer it for a couple of days.

MR. MACARTNEY: As to paragraph 3, is it not a fact that a number of the people when their cattle were seized came in and paid their rents?

\*MR. J. MORLEY: I have asked for a Report on the matter and have not yet received it.

#### WAR OFFICE ADVERTISEMENTS.

MR. BROMLEY DAVENPORT (Cheshire, Macclesfield): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether, in the selection of provincial newspapers in which War Office advertisements are inserted, the amount of circulation is the guiding principle, or whether any other circumstances, such as political opinions, are taken into account?

\*MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: Sir, the amount of circulation is the guiding principle; but the hon. Gentleman, if he investigates the matter, will find that the amount of circulation somewhat varies according to the politics of the Government in power.

#### WELSH GRAMMAR SCHOOL.

MR. STANLEY LEIGHTON (Shropshire, Oswestry): I beg to ask the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education if he will explain why

a copy of the schemes of management of the Intermediate Education Fund in the County of Carnarvon, of the Grammar or Friars School, Bangor, and of the Grammar School, Bottwnog, which was presented to the House and ordered to be printed on the 9th February, have not yet been printed and circulated; and whether he is aware that the period allowed for moving an Address to Her Majesty, praying Her Majesty to withhold Her consent from such schemes, expires on the 9th April?

**MR. ACLAND:** The dates mentioned are as stated by the hon. Member. The scheme was sent to the Stationery Office on February 9th, but, on inquiry, I find that it has not yet been received back from the printers. I regret the delay that has taken place. Meanwhile the scheme has been available to the public for some time, and copies can be obtained at the Charity Commission Office.

**MR. STANLEY LEIGHTON** asked if the right hon. Gentleman would withdraw the schemes and present them again, so that the period contemplated by the Statute for objections should not be curtailed?

**MR. ACLAND:** As the scheme has been available to the public for some time, I do not think that would be necessary.

**MR. STANLEY LEIGHTON** said that on Thursday he should move an Address to Her Majesty praying her to withhold her assent from the schemes.

#### BUTESHIRE MAGISTRATES.

**DR. CLARK:** I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland whether he is aware that of the 15 new Magistrates appointed for Buteshire since 1st February, 1893, 13 are Unionists, and only two Liberals; whether the two Liberals appointed are Provosts of Rothsay and Millport; and if he will represent to the Lord Chancellor the advisability of remedying this disparity?

**SIR G. TREVELYAN:** I have already placed a representation with regard to this matter before the Lord Chancellor, who, I have no doubt, will give it his consideration.

#### THE BANK OF IRELAND STOCK.

**SIR ELLIS ASHMEAD-BARTLETT** (Sheffield, Eccleshall): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether the attention of the Government has been called to the serious fall in the value of the Stock of the Bank of Ireland, the principal Irish railways, and commercial undertakings since 13th February, 1893; and whether he will grant the Return which is to be moved for this day?

**THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY** (Mr. W. E. GLADSTONE, Edinburgh, Midlothian): Yes; I have noticed the fall in the Bank of Ireland Stock and the fall in one or two other—noticeable falls—Irish securities, but I have no observations to make upon the subject, and I have no means of giving official information to Parliament. I can only refer to the public sources of information, which are as open to the hon. Member as they are to me.

**SIR E. ASHMEAD-BARTLETT:** I should like to ask whether the right hon. Gentleman is aware that the amount of depreciation which has occurred in eight of the principal Irish securities amount to nearly £2,000,000?

**MR. W. E. GLADSTONE** rose.

**MR. WEIR:** I should like to ask whether the "bears" have not been particularly active during the last few days?

**MR. W. E. GLADSTONE** did not reply.

#### THE CHIEF JUSTICE OF MALTA.

**MR. PIERPOINT** (Warrington): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies whether Sir Adriano Dingli, Chief Justice of Malta, has been appointed Vice President of the Council, with a salary of £150 a year, to be paid out of the Civil List of the Islands; and whether this sum is in addition to the salary of £1,000 a year, which he receives as Chief Justice?

**MR. BUXTON:** The answer to both questions is "yes." I may add that Her Majesty's Government consider themselves fortunate in having secured the services of Sir Adriano Dingli as Vice President of the Council.

## PLEADING IN COUNTY COURTS.

MR. MORTON (for Mr. BRAND, (Cambridge, Wisbech) : I beg to ask the Attorney General whether it is competent, or in accordance with ordinary practice, in cases coming before a County Court Judge, that a son of the said County Court Judge should plead on behalf of one of the parties ?

\*THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Sir C. RUSSELL, Hackney, S.) : I have to say that it is competent for a son to appear before his father, but I cannot say that there is any practice one way or the other. It is a question of good taste.

## EQUALITY OF MEMBERS.

DR. FARQUHARSON (Aberdeenshire, W.) : I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether, in order to carry out more effectually the principle of the absolute equality of all Members of this House, he will consider the propriety of depriving Members of the Bar of the exclusive privilege they now enjoy of being addressed as "honourable and learned" ?

MR. RENTOUL (Down, E.) : Before the right hon. Gentleman replies I should like to ask whether, to carry out more effectually the equality of Members, he will consider the advisability of depriving them of the right of putting themselves down on the Notice Paper under the title of "Doctor" ?

MR. W. E. GLADSTONE : I think it is evident to my hon. Friend from what has already taken place that if I were to give an incautious answer we might become involved in great complications. My hon. Friend will take note that this is a matter entirely of private judgment and free independent practice, in which it would be very dangerous for me to attempt to interfere.

## SCOTCH BUSINESS AND THE DELEGATION SYSTEM.

THE MARQUESS OF CARMARTHEN (Brixton) : I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether it is true, as reported, that it is the intention of the Government to refer all purely Scotch measures to a Committee consisting of all the Scottish Members ; and, if so, whether all purely English measures will in a like manner be referred to a Committee consisting of all the English

Members ; and, if not, will he explain on what grounds ?

MR. W. E. GLADSTONE : I do not know whether it is open to put the construction upon questions that they are not sometimes in their tone favourable to Home Rule because of the anxiety shown as to what will follow that measure. As to the immediate subject of the question, it is undoubtedly a fact that there is a wide-spread dissatisfaction among hon. Members with respect to the progress, or rather the non-progress, of Scotch business in the House of Commons. I sympathise with Scotch Members, and recognise that there is cause for their dissatisfaction ; and we are very desirous to consider whether it may not be possible, by some judicious measure affecting the Procedure of the House, to remove some part of the evil. On the first opportunity we have to make a proposal on the subject, if we are able to do so, I will take care that due notice of it is given to the House.

THE MARQUESS OF CARMARTHEN : The right hon. Gentleman has not answered the latter part of my question.

MR. W. E. GLADSTONE : I do not think it is convenient in the interest of Public Business to heap contingency upon contingency. The established practice of many Departments with regard to contingencies is not to arrive at a conclusion or say what they would do until the contingency arrives. I cannot consent to go beyond the answer I have already given with respect to Scotland, and if we take a step of that kind with respect to Scotland it will be for the noble Marquess to consider whether it is desirable to propose any such step with regard to England.

## ACCIDENTS IN MINES.

MR. DAVID THOMAS (Merthyr Tydvil) : I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he can state the number of deaths caused in the United Kingdom by defective pit-ropes and chains during the past 10 years ; whether he is aware that at present no official test is applied to ropes or chains used in lowering and raising workmen engaged in mining to and from their work ; and whether he will consider the practicability of instituting some official test ?

**MR. ASQUITH :** The number of deaths caused by defective pit-ropes and chains during the past 10 years is reported to be 20, or an average of two per annum, in metalliferous mines, and 46, or an average of 4·6 per annum, in coal mines. There is at present no official test applied to ropes or chains. My hon. Friend is aware that by the fifth General Rule of Section 49 of the Coal Mines Act, 1887, it is the duty of mine-owners to have the ropes and chains examined every 24 hours by a competent person. I have consulted the Mines Inspectors, and have come to the conclusion that it is undesirable to relieve the mine-owner of his proper responsibility in this respect, and, as at present advised, I do not propose to institute any official test for these ropes.

#### PATENT AGENTS' RULES.

**MR. PARKER SMITH :** I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether his attention has been called to the recent case of "*Lockwood v. The Chartered Institute of Patent Agents*," in which it has been decided by the Court of Session that the Patent Agents' Rules, 1889, are not in accordance with "*The Patents, Designs, and Trade Marks Act, 1888*," under which they purport to be made, and that the Institute of Patent Agents have no power to impose fees for registration of patent agents; whether he is aware that the fees hitherto charged have been greatly in excess of any requirements of registration, and have been used for the general purposes of the Institute; and, if so, what steps he will take to secure the restitution of such fees already paid; and whether he will recall the Rules in question, and will issue a fresh set, by which the Register of Patent Agents shall be kept by the Comptroller General of Patents or other officer of the Board of Trade, and not under the control of any private Association?

**MR. MUNDELLA :** Yes, Sir; my attention has been called to the decision referred to by the hon. Member. It is my intention to give a reasonable time in order that it may be decided whether an appeal against this decision will be presented. If no appeal is presented and the decision is not reversed, I shall lose no time in cancelling the Rules. I am not at present able to say anything

as regards the form in which new Rules, as they become necessary, will be framed. I have no power to order the restitution of fees, but the matter, I understand, is under the consideration of the Institute.

#### PAHANG.

**MR. HARRY FOSTER** (Suffolk, Lowestoft) : I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies whether the Government have considered the three alternative courses, recommended by the British Resident in Pahang, with regard to the policy to be adopted towards that State, as stated in his Annual Report for 1891, recently presented to Parliament, namely, raising a loan, either in the open market or otherwise, to provide for an annual expenditure during the next five years of two or three hundred thousand dollars on public works; attaching the administration of Pahang (*qua* the European staff) to some more prosperous State, such as Selangor, and combining the budgets; returning to the system in force when he was appointed Resident of Pahang in 1888—namely, leaving all collections, as well as the general administration, in the hands of the Sultan and his Native officials, the Resident having only a Sikh bodyguard and one or two European assistants, and having regard to the strong recommendation contained in the concluding paragraph, whether the Government have come to any determination upon the subject?

**MR. S. BUXTON :** The Secretary of State is not prepared at present to make any statement on the subject of Pahang. The decision largely depends on financial considerations. Lord Ripon is in communication with the Governor of the Straits Settlements on the whole question, and is giving it his most careful attention.

#### PUBLIC VACCINATORS.

**MR. WILLOX** (Liverpool, Everton) : I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether, in view of the fact that the Bill to abolish cumulative fines for non-vaccination, if passed, will operate to reduce the annual earnings of public vaccinators who, under the Compulsory Vaccination Acts 1867 and 1871, are in most cases paid by a fee for each child successfully vaccinated by a public

vaccinator or a private medical practitioner, he will recommend that such officers should in future be paid, in lieu of fees, a fixed salary equal in amount to their average emoluments from fees and other sources?

**MR. ASQUITH** : It is by no means clear that the effect of the Bill will be to reduce the earnings of the public vaccinators. In the event of such a reduction taking place the Local Government Board will no doubt consider whether any and what measures should be taken, either by fixing a salary or raising the fee, to make provision for the case. But I cannot give any pledge on the subject.

#### THE SCOTCH SUSPENSORY BILL.

**MR. HOZIER** (Lanarkshire, S.) : I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether the Suspensory Bill for the Church of Scotland is to be introduced next week ; and, if not, when ?

**MR. W. E. GLADSTONE** : It is not to be introduced next week, but due notice will be given.

**SIR JAMES FERGUSON** (Manchester, N.E.) : In view of the great agitation and distress that have been caused by the intended attack upon the oldest Institution of the country, will the right hon. Gentleman be so good as to name some day for the introduction of the Bill, or some day before which it will not be introduced ?

**MR. DALZIEL** (Kirkcaldy, &c.) : Is it not the fact that the people of Scotland, by an overwhelming majority, through their Representatives, have declared in favour of this Bill ?

**MR. W. E. GLADSTONE** : A large majority of the Representatives of Scotland are favourable to some change in the Ecclesiastical arrangements of that country, which is in the nature of Disestablishment. An opinion in that sense was declared on the part of Representatives of Scotland in the last Parliament. With respect to the Bill, I have stated that it will not be introduced before the end of next week, and I shall take care that no hon. Member shall suffer inconvenience with respect to the matter.

#### NEW MEMBERS SWORN.

James Gibney, esquire, for Meath County (North Meath Division) ; William Allan, esquire, for Borough of Gateshead.

*Mr. Willor*

## MOTIONS.

### ADJOURNMENT OF THE HOUSE.

#### COUNTY CLARE (LAWLESSNESS).

\***Mr. T. W. RUSSELL**, Member for South Tyrone, rose in his place, and asked leave to move the Adjournment of the House for the purpose of discussing a definite matter of urgent public importance—namely, “The lawless condition of the county of Clare and the total absence of security for life and property in that part of the Queen’s dominions ;” but the pleasure of the House not having been signified,

**MR. SPEAKER** called on those Members who supported the Motion to rise in their places, and not less than 40 Members having accordingly risen,

**MR. SEXTON** : On a point of order, I wish to ask whether, having regard to the statement of the learned Judge cited in the House to-day, that the amount of crime in County Clare during the last year was less than in the preceding year, and having regard also to the statement that has been made by the responsible Minister of the Crown, that he is engaged in concerting measures for the security of life and property in concert with the Authorities of County Clare, this is such a “definite matter of urgent public importance” as can be properly discussed on a Motion for the Adjournment of the House.

**MR. SPEAKER** : That is a matter which is entirely within the discretion of hon. Members who may choose to support the hon. Member’s proposals.

**MR. W. REDMOND** : I rise to a point of Order. I should like to ask whether it is in accordance with the Rules of this House that a Debate should be introduced upon a matter with regard to which hon. Gentlemen have not had an opportunity—

\***MR. SPEAKER** : Order, order ! I call on Mr. Russell.

\***MR. T. W. RUSSELL** said that, after what had taken place that afternoon, he did not think it necessary to offer any apology for interrupting the Business of the House with his present Motion. It was the first duty of any Government to protect the life and property of its subjects. When the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary informed them that things were as

bad in County Clare 12 months ago as they were now, he (Mr. Russell) maintained that that fact simply increased the right hon. Gentleman's responsibility, while it did not lessen his (Mr. Russell's), or that of any other independent Member. His contention was that, in view of the state of the County of Clare, a great and solemn duty was cast upon the Government; and not only that, but, in his opinion, a great and solemn duty was also cast upon Her Majesty's Opposition, and upon the independent Members of that House. If the law could not be asserted in Clare by ordinary means then let extraordinary measures be adopted. It was the primary business of the House to see that life and property in that part of the Queen's dominions were secure. Now, what were the facts in regard to this question? They had heard some observations that day in regard to Mr. Justice O'Brien, who had made two statements to the Grand Jury in regard to crime in the County Clare. Who was Mr. Justice O'Brien? [A VOICE: A promoted Crown prosecutor.] He spoke of Mr. Justice O'Brien as one of the most distinguished of Irish Judges. He was one of the most learned and able of those Judges. Beyond all doubt this could be asserted with perfect propriety of Mr. Justice O'Brien, that if he were not competent to discharge his duty the fault rested with the right hon. Gentleman the Prime Minister who appointed him. This was not an appointment of the Tory Party. It was an appointment of the present Prime Minister, and it was one of the best appointments that the right hon. Gentleman had ever made. What did Mr. Justice O'Brien say on this subject? Because it was worth while to get at the actual facts of this case. He (Mr. T. W. Russell) was not going to quote from the report of Mr. Justice O'Brien's remarks which appeared in *The Times*, but he should quote from the fullest report that he had been able to find in all the newspapers. In addressing the Grand Jury of County Clare, on Monday last, Mr. Justice O'Brien said—

"I must say that the picture that the returns made by the Constabulary of the state of crime in the county present to my mind shows a state of lawlessness exceeding in amount—far exceeding in amount—that which has come under your notice or mine in past time, and destined, I fear, unless checked by some vigorous hand,

to increase. I have come to know that the state of this county of late has engaged the attention of a body corresponding, I suppose, exactly to your own class—the Magistrates of the County of Clare, all having a deep interest in the prosperity, industry, and happiness of this county, all well acquainted with its condition, and having the means of judging which local information can alone supply of the cause of this state of things. Therefore it becomes unnecessary for me, and, perhaps because of the duty I have to perform at this Assizes, it is not desirable for me, to enter into any great detail by way of explanation of this state of things. The facts are all known to yourselves. You know there is no security for life in this county. You know that property is not secure any more than life; you know that a system of intimidation exists that is carried into all the relations of private and domestic life, carried into all the relations that arise out of trade and every kind of occupation, and unless some power intervenes of greater efficiency than mere judicial statement or exposition, I cannot but foresee that the evil will go on increasing."

He asserted that no more solemn utterance could be considered by the House of Commons. It was not only what Mr. Justice O'Brien said on Monday; but let the House listen to what he said yesterday in closing the Assizes and dismissing the Grand Jury. ["No, no!"] At all events, here were Mr. Justice O'Brien's words, and they were delivered in closing the Assizes. What did he say? At the conclusion of the criminal business at the Clare Assizes, held at Ennis, Mr. Justice O'Brien said—

"He had refrained from making any allusion to certain matters dealing with the administration of the law in County Clare, in charging the Grand Jury at the commencement of the Assizes, because he did not wish to influence the result of the legal proceedings then pending; but he now considered it right to draw the attention of those who were charged with the maintenance of law and order and the preservation of life and property to the result of those legal proceedings, which showed that no kind of security any longer existed for property or for life, so far as the same depended upon the law, as it now existed, in County Clare. Seven cases had been tried before him, representing an infinitesimal part of the actual crime, but with the uniform result that the law had entirely failed to bring the offenders to justice, in spite of every means that vigilance, care, and zeal in trying to attain this object. Every kind of argument had been made use of to the jurors—to their sense of self-respect, to the common interests of the whole community, and to their sense of moral obligations, if such a thing remained—but without the least result."

He said the jurors, in spite of every appeal to their consciences, had failed to do their duty, and this was to be attributed to



"A system of intimidation which existed in all the relations of life, which affected the whole framework of society, and which affected the administration of the law."

A statement such as that, coming from Mr. Justice O'Brien, was one of the most solemn that Parliament could consider. This House was now seized of information—and seized of the best information it could be possessed of—coming, as it did, from one of Her Majesty's Judges of Assize, showing that there was no security for life, and as little security for property, in County Clare. In face of a statement like that from the Representative of Her Majesty in County Clare, he (Mr. T. W. Russell) at all events, as an Irish Member, should not have been doing his duty if he had not directed the attention of the House to the subject. Something had been said by the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary about things having been as bad some time ago in Clare.

An hon. MEMBER : Worse.

MR. T. W. RUSSELL : Yes ; or, perhaps, rather worse. But he would call the attention of the House to the facts of the case. Mr. Justice O'Brien had referred to a meeting of Magistrates held on the 22nd January last, under the chairmanship of the Lord Lieutenant of the county, Lord Inchiquin, to consider these matters. Lord Inchiquin in his opening statement that day took, for purposes of comparison, the first and second half of 1892, and pointed out that there were 40 serious crimes, and 60 crimes of a less serious nature during the first six months of last year ; while from July to December there were 43 serious offences, as against 40, and the less serious offences had diminished in number from 60 to 44. These figures showed, therefore, an increase—slight, if they would—in the graver crimes, and a decrease in the less serious offences. That was exactly the position brought out at the Magistrates' meeting on 22nd January last. He would now give the House, roughly, a dozen or so of cases to show what kind of place County Clare must be for civilised people to live in. September 12—James Hickey, Lower Tulla ; turf burned and house fired into. September 17—Peter Maloney ; hay burned at Nutfield. September 19—James Green, Tulla ; assaulted seriously in the execution of his duty.

*Mr. T. W. Russell*

An hon. MEMBER : Was he a bailiff ?

MR. T. W. RUSSELL said that if the man had been a bailiff he would have been as much entitled to the protection of the law as the hon. Member himself. It would be an infamous thing for this country to ask men to perform their service and then say they could be assaulted because they were only bailiffs. He supposed that was what bailiffs would get in Ireland by-and-bye. September 22—John Ryan, Lisduff ; attacked by two men and severely beaten near Rathdowney. September 27—Thomas Walsh, Bodyke ; fired at. October 2—P. A. O'Dwyer, New Park House, Ennis ; house broken into and gun stolen. October 13—Michael Glynn, Ashline, Ennis ; straw burned for employing a certain man, also served with threatening letters. October 16—Thomas O'Driscoll, Drumbiggie, Ennis ; house fired into, owner had a narrow escape ; three or four weeks ago an attempt to burn his cowhouse ; received threatening letters. October 17—Michael Hogan, Ballycashin, near Ennis ; moonlighters attacked his house ; also fired at on September 17 ; three heifers belonging to him brutally mutilated at Coolbawn, November 12—John Sexton, Lisheen, aged 70 ; brutally assaulted for taking boycotted grazing. November 28—Michael M'Mahon, Drumcaranmore ; hay burned. November 24—Mrs. Carrick, Tormaclean ; house entered by moonlighters, who demanded firearms ; they carried off a gun. He could go on quoting the list. There were a large number of cases, but he had mentioned sufficient to show what a pleasant place the County of Clare must be, and, particularly, how delightful a town Ennis must be to live in. Mr. Justice O'Brien undoubtedly said that crime was fairly distributed over the whole year, but he (Mr. T. W. Russell) declined to take any notice whatever of any argument which went to show that crime was as bad in Clare 12 months ago as it was now. The Government of the day were responsible for the security of life and property, and he maintained that the House, before setting to any other business, was bound to see that this was done. What had been the action of the present Chief Secretary ? He came into Office on 20th August. He knew the state of things in County Clare—it

was patent to everybody, What was his first action? Why, to suspend what was left of the Crimes Act. It was quite true that the Leader of the Opposition, while Chief Secretary, owing to the condition of the country had released Ireland from part of the Act; it was also true that the right hon. Gentleman the Member for North Leeds took off from County Clare some part of what the right hon. Gentleman had left. But let them see what the present Chief Secretary had cleared off, because it was a mistake to say that the right hon. Gentleman the late Chief Secretary released Clare from the operation of the Crimes Act. When the present Government came into Office the condition of things was this: They had a right in the face of serious crimes to order a secret inquiry to take place. The right hon. Gentleman had parted with that. There was power to change the venue on the Motion of the Attorney General. The right hon. Gentleman had parted with that. There was a clause in the Crimes Act enabling offences to be tried by special juries. The right hon. Gentleman had parted with that. There was another clause enabling cases of riot to be tried under summary jurisdiction, and the right hon. Gentleman had parted with that.

MR. SEXTON: He could not part with that. It is the law for all Ireland.

MR. T. W. RUSSELL: Yes; but the right hon. Gentleman parted with safeguards under the Crimes Act, and there is more difficulty in acting under the general law than under the Crimes Act. In the face of the serious condition of County Clare, the right hon. Gentleman deliberately parted with those safeguards which his Predecessor had thought necessary. The right hon. Gentleman would probably tell him that these provisions were no use; but he could not get off on that plea. Figures made an end of that contention. Take the state of things before the Crimes Act was passed. In 1877, before the land agitation commenced, there were only five agrarian offences in the whole County of Clare. That was an important point to start from. In 1878 there were eight; in 1879, 21; in 1880, 91; in 1881, when the Land League agitation was at its height, 213; in 1882, 207. The Crimes Act was passed in that year—not the Crimes Act of the right hon. Gentleman

the Leader of the Opposition, but that of the First Lord of the Treasury. Hon. Gentlemen told them that a Crimes Act was no use in Clare! In 1882 there were 207 agrarian offences; in 1883, with a Crimes Act in operation, they had fallen to 55; in 1884 they had fallen to 38; in 1885, they had gone up to 88; in 1886, when the Crimes Act was repealed or had expired, they went up to 141 again. Take off the Crimes Act, and agrarian crime went up. In 1887, the offences had gone up to 153; in 1888, with a Crimes Act, they came down to 104; in 1889 to 63; in 1890 to 58; and in 1891 to 94. Anyone who stated that Crimes Acts were of no use in dealing with a condition of affairs such as existed in County Clare could not possibly have studied the history of previous Crimes Acts under which Clare had been put. What was the real condition of affairs in County Clare? It was not an ordinary criminal state. He wanted to impress that upon the House. Anybody who knew anything about that county knew that for long years it had been in the hands of a secret society. Everybody in authority knew perfectly well that under the Crimes Act that secret society was broken up, and they knew well that its component parts—although there was 'no cohesion—were scattered throughout the whole country. There were branches in Ennis, Crusheen, and other villages. He had been through the whole county, and he had obtained his information on the spot.

MR. W. REDMOND: From whom?

MR. T. W. RUSSELL: Never mind from whom. He said the leaders of these secret societies were as well known as hon. Members were known in that House. The question he had to ask, and to ask most solemnly, was this—whether these secret societies, these lawless organisations, were to be supreme, or whether the law of the Queen was to be supreme? The House would please to observe that it was not landlords who suffered in this matter. They were not subjected to violence because they could protect themselves, but if Members cared to go over this list of outrages in County Clare for the past year they would find it was the poor men and women who desired to lead honest lives, and who had no sympathy with this ruffianism, who were subjected to violence and outrage.

For the sake of these poor people the right hon. Gentleman ought to be compelled to assert the supremacy of the law at all costs, and if he could not secure that safety to the subject in Clare to which every man was entitled by the ordinary law then it was his duty to come to that House and ask for extraordinary powers, and the Members of the Opposition were bound to compel the Government to do this if they would not do it of themselves. The whole case had been put in a nutshell by the Chairman of the meeting of magistrates, held on the 22nd January, who closed his speech by these words—

"Their contention was that everybody in County Clare was entitled to say to the Government 'we call upon you to allow us to go about our business without let or hindrance.' Would anyone who knows the county say it was the case that they could go about their avocations without interference? They knew it was not the case."

He (Mr. Russell) held he had conclusively proved the case that he rose to establish. He said that it was a definite matter of urgent public importance; he said now that nobody could challenge that assertion, and he maintained this: that before they disestablished churches; before they wrecked an Empire; before they made a laughing-stock of the English Constitution, aye, even before they closed public-houses, or attempted to close them—which they were not going to do—he said even before that they were bound to see that every poor man and woman in County Clare had the protection of the law to which he or she was entitled. He begged to move the Motion.

COLONEL SAUNDERSON seconded the Motion. He quite agreed with the Mover that under ordinary circumstances moving the adjournment of the House ought to be avoided. Some hon. Members might imagine that they had taken this step with a view to obstruction. ["Hear, hear!"] He was glad to hear that cheer, because if they remembered the Motions for Adjournment that were made in past years, it would appear from those cheers that there were hon. Members in the House who differentiated between the value of the life of a loyal Irishman and the life of one who was disloyal to the Crown. Men who lost their lives in assaulting the police were causes of moving the Adjournment of the House;

cases when the police were supposed to have used undue violence in maintaining the law of the land constituted a foundation for moving the Adjournment of the House; and here when a Judge had declared that the law no longer obtains in Clare, and that crime and outrage had been perpetrated unpunished, when they got up to move the Adjournment of the House hon. Members called it obstruction. Well, what had they succeeded in extorting from the Chief Secretary? He had told them he was going to think about moving a certain number of police into the County Clare. What good would that do? He did not believe, and he could not conceive how the right hon. Gentleman could believe, that whether he moved the police in Clare or did not move them would affect the cause of crime in Clare. The cause of crime in Clare was this—that crime in Clare could be committed with impunity, not because there were not sufficient police, but because when a criminal was brought before a Clare Jury he was instantly acquitted. The Chief Secretary in speaking of Clare had used these words—"In Clare a hateful demoralisation had existed for years past." That was a fearful description of a county, and he should like to know if that were an apt and accurate description of an English county would it not be felt to be the first duty of the Government to alter such a state of things. But when it happened in Ireland many people looked upon it as the natural condition in which an Irishman liked to live. He could, however, assure hon. Members that the people of Clare valued protection of lives and property just as much as they did in England, Scotland and Wales, and all that Clare asked—all that the law-abiding people of Clare asked—of the Government, was that the law might be re-established in that county when it no longer existed. The right hon. Gentleman (Mr. J. Morley), when he assumed office, found certain clauses of the Crimes Act still in force. He swept those clauses away. He (Colonel Saunderson) thought the clause in the Act which was of real value in crushing out crime in Clare was that relating to change of venue, and which enabled offences occurring in that county to be tried elsewhere. Some hon. Members that afternoon asked whether convictions could not be obtained in Clare.

The history of the past 10 years had proved that a conviction for an agrarian crime in Clare was an absolute impossibility. In the last 10 years Clare had been stained with blood over and over again, but not one single conviction for murder had been obtained in Clare for the last 10 or 12 years. Elsewhere conviction had been obtained, but as Judge O'Brien told them, at the present moment to bring any prisoner before a jury in Clare for an agrarian offence was an absolute waste of time. He said that was a condition of affairs which ought not to be allowed to continue for one moment, and for the Chief Secretary simply to tell them he was thinking about drafting a certain number of constables over the borders of County Clare was trifling with the House of Commons, and trifling with the preservation of life and property in Ireland, which it ought to be his very first duty to maintain. The right hon. Gentleman might say that Clare was a demoralised county and had been so for many years past, but the figures which his hon. Friend (Mr. T. W. Russell) had quoted showed that, up to a certain period of its history, Clare was as peaceful as any other county in Ireland. Clare had not that triple dose of original sin which the right hon. Gentleman might think. The demoralisation of County Clare could be traced to one cause, and one cause alone. How did Clare get into this state? Crime in Clare had been of an agrarian character, otherwise he did not believe it was more criminal than any other county in Ireland. How did this species of crime originate? Clare unfortunately was ground which appeared to be favourable for the development of a certain class of crime, and those who sowed that crime were the present supporters of the right hon. Gentleman opposite. The Land League was started in Clare. Fifty-seven branches of that organisation which now supported the Chief Secretary were started in that county, and they had in that county an executive police who carried out their unwritten law, without which the Land League would never have succeeded in holding its ground for a moment in any part of Ireland. Gentlemen then came up to Clare and made speeches, and this was why Clare had become what it was—a disgrace to any civilised country. He would just give a specimen of the

speeches made in Clare to keep the people up to the mark. The object of the hatred of the National League had naturally been land grabbing. The National League and its leaders devoted all their efforts to stamp out land grabbing. Land hunger in Ireland was so great, the temptation to Irishmen to possess farms was so strong, that even with the fear of death before their eyes, in many cases land grabbing took place. If land grabbing went on the whole of the agitation would fall into ruin, and this is the way land grabbing was treated in Clare. This was the speech—

“We have and we shall continue to put down land grabbing, in spite of all the appeals of the Government. We shall continue to put it down in spite of the Coercion Act, and so long as the lands of Bodyke are unlet and untitled and unprolific, so long will you find the rest of the landlords of Clare much easier to deal with. I do not wish to detain you at any great length. You know the lesson.”

That speech was made on a Sunday. Sunday was a great day in Ireland for stimulating the Irish people to Christian obedience to the law. One week after the Sunday on which that speech was made by the Member for Mayo (Mr. Dillou) a deliberate attempt was made to murder a man called Sexton.

MR. DILLON (interposing): It is only just I should be allowed to point out when that charge is made that that attempt to murder was organised by the police in Clare.

COLONEL SAUNDERSON was not in the least surprised at that interruption, because hon. Members below the Gangway always imputed the breaking of the law that had occurred during the last 10 years to the Government of the day, and to the police and the Judges. But, at any rate, it could not be denied that an attempt was made to murder that man, which was only defeated by the fact that the police got information, and intervened, saving Sexton at the expense of one of their own lives. That was the way that the Moonlighters—who were, and always had been, the Executive of the Land League—were kept up to the mark; that was the way that this condition of affairs—which the Chief Secretary had described as the “hateful demoralisation of Clare for years past”—had been secured. Who were the demoralisers? The Member for Mayo and his friends.

Some of the people objected to coercion. Was there coercion in Clare at the present moment? The Coercion Act which was passed by that House had been denounced and decried before all the constituencies in Great Britain. Was the Coercion Act passed by the House of Commons ever so abhorrent, so detestable, so abominable as the coercion in Clare to-day? As far as he was concerned, he deplored the crime in Clare, but he said that at the present moment it was a fortunate thing that the British people should get some definitive idea of what Home Rule meant. They had Home Rule in Clare. They had the law-breakers, the criminal law-defiers, masters of the situation. It was the duty of the Executive Government to put that down and stamp this thing under foot. But instead they proposed to make these men masters of Ireland. He said that this discussion on the condition of Clare and the Charge of Judge O'Brien in dismissing the Jury should ring round the land, and would prove to every right-minded man that in attempting to make this abhorrent rule supreme in Ireland the Government had made a mistake, and that they who intended to resist it and crush it under foot were more than justified in doing so.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That this House do now adjourn."—*(Mr. T. W. Russell.)*

\*THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. J. MORLEY, Newcastle-upon-Tyne): The hon. Member who moved the adjournment wore his broadest phylactery and used his most pharasaic language—*[Ministerial cheers and Opposition cries of "Withdraw"]*—used his most pharasaic language. *[Opposition cries of "Withdraw!"]* When I have used an unparliamentary word the Speaker will call me to order. The hon. Member talked about the great and solemn duty that had been cast upon him, but we all know what the real reason is. We all know what the secret of it is. It has nothing to do with Clare. This Motion is made because gentlemen opposite have been castigated in leading articles in their own Press. This Motion is their way of showing that they are not maladroit, that they are not lethargic, that they are not nerveless, that they are none of the things that

their own friends during the last few days have been saying they were. A great deal has been said as to the responsibility of the Government of the day. I accept that responsibility, for my part, in its fullest sense. I quite agree with the hon. Member and with my hon. and gallant Friend the Member for North Armagh that the first duty of the Government is to see that the law is obeyed. The first duty of the Government is to see that security of life and property is restored in Clare as speedily as may be. But I wonder why the hon. Member who makes this Motion and who feels such a tremendous weight of moral responsibility, why he did not feel it before? Why did he not feel it in March last, when the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Leeds withdrew the extra force from Clare?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: How much extra force?

Mr. J. MORLEY: Forty-seven men. *[A laugh.]* Gentlemen opposite laugh. I wonder if they know what proportion of the whole force in Clare that is. They withdrew them, mark, at the request of the Grand Jury, the very gentlemen to whom the Judge was speaking. Why did he not feel this weight of responsibility? Why did he not call the Government of that day to account, and beg them to recognise that the first duty of the Government was the security of life and property, when the Government of that day revoked the Proclamation of the Crimes Act, so far as certain clauses are concerned, in Clare? Why did he not make his speech in July?

Mr. T. W. RUSSELL: The reason why I did not do it was that my attention had not been directed to it by a Judge.

Mr. J. MORLEY: The hon. Gentleman talked about Mr. Justice O'Brien's Charge. I do not want to use a single disrespectful word of Mr. Justice O'Brien.

Mr. CARSON: You did.

Mr. J. MORLEY: I said if a certain utterance, apparently abbreviated, was authentic that it was not in my opinion a judicial utterance. Now, I am not going into any recriminatory charges as to the conduct of the late Government compared with my own. All this goes to show, if the case be true, that the state of Clare was as bad for the last six

years, during which hon. Gentlemen opposite were responsible for it, as it has been in the six months during which I have been responsible. What does it show? If the House were serious, if the hon. Member were serious in his contention, it shows that the task is one which has been too much for either one Government or another. Does it not show that? If the right hon. Gentleman and his friends had control of the Government and had their Coercion Act in force for six years, and still left Clare as we know it was left last July, and if we are able to make no better report to-day than we are able to do, I say what does it show? You will give your own Leader credit for force, judgment, and firmness, whether you give it to me or not. What does the fact show? That he, with all the force and with all the special legislation that he had at his command, was unable to do any more than I have been able to do, but rather less. The hon. Member quoted from the Judge's Charge the reference to the meeting of magistrates. I make no complaint of the magistrates in any respect. I do not impugn their motives in holding that meeting, but this I do say—that they, at all events at that meeting, brought no charges against Her Majesty's Government. What were the points that they dwelt upon? The first was the withdrawal of the military. It is clear enough that a troop of hussars or a troop of dragoons is not of much use in catching moonlighters red-handed. But they said, and it has been held by many responsible for the Government of Ireland, that the presence of a military force has an overawing effect. But the military forces were not withdrawn by me, but were withdrawn in 1890 by the right hon. Gentleman opposite. The withdrawal of the extra police I have already dealt with.

**MR. A. J. BALFOUR:** What was the date of the withdrawal of the extra police force?

**MR. J. MORLEY:** March, 1892. The Magistrates, no doubt, said we ought to give them a larger share of what is known as the "free force"—that is to say, the force for which the county does not pay. I pointed out in February that that is what we cannot do. The free force, as the right hon. Gentleman opposite well knows, is a quota fixed by

statute, and only revisable at triennial intervals. The time for revising the free force for the County of Clare will not be till 1894. In a matter of that kind I am bound to consult advisers with police experience, and I am assured—and I do not suppose the right hon. Gentleman will differ—that for the purpose of discovering crime in Clare, with which we have to deal, an importation of outside detectives would be one of the most foolish things any Executive Government could propose. I will not weary the House with many figures; but I should like the House to be kind enough to mark a few of the figures. No doubt, as the hon. Member says, about 1884 and 1885 the average of crime in Clare was very low; but he forgot to say that that was probably due to the Land Act and the Arrears Act, and it was not at all due to the Coercion Act, I thank my right hon. Friend the Member for West Birmingham (Mr. J. Chamberlain). Now what are the figures? I will not weary the House with them, but they are really all you have to go upon. The figures for the quarter ending December 31st, 1891, when the late Government were in Office, were 17 agrarian, 25 non-agrarian, or a total of 42; for the quarter ending December 31, 1892, when we were in Office, exactly the same total, 12 agrarian and 30 non-agrarian; for the half-year ending June 30, 1891, 40 agrarian and 48 non-agrarian, or a total of 88.

**COLONEL SAUNDERSON:** Does the right hon. Gentleman include moonlighting among agrarian offences?

**MR. J. MORLEY:** I have not the proper answer to that question to hand, but I may say that the classification of moonlighting offences as agrarian or non-agrarian would depend upon the circumstances attending it. I do not deny for a moment that there are some of the most troublesome and worst cases now perpetrated in the County of Clare which would not figure in the Agrarian Returns, because they are not connected, so far as the police could ascertain, with agrarian circumstances. But the question of my right hon. Friend is a perfectly apt question, and I will deal with it fully at another time. For the half-year ending December 31, 1891, the figures were 54 agrarian and 55 non-agrarian, a total of 109; for the half-year ending Decem-

ber 31, 1892, 35 agrarian and 63 non-agrarian, giving a total of 98, or a reduction of 11. Then taking the whole year ending December 31, 1891, the agrarian outrages in Clare were 94, non-agrarian 103, or a total of 197. In our year—that is the year ending December 31, 1892—they were 79 and 122, or a total of 201, and an increase of four only, and these, as the learned Judge remarked in his Charge, are distributed pretty equally over the year. I could amplify those figures if it were worth while, but I do not think it is. Perhaps the House would, however, care to know the total number of specially reported agrarian cases in Clare for the last six years. They were in 1887, 269; in 1888, 224; in 1889, 162; in 1890, 156; in 1891, 197; and in 1892, 201. Now, Sir, though it is quite true that the Judge remarked that there is an absence of security for life in Clare, it is worthy of note that there has been no case of murder in Clare since 1892.

\*MR. T. W. RUSSELL: Will the right hon. Gentleman tell us how many attempted murders?

MR. J. MORLEY: There have been far too many cases, as the hon. Member knows. The hon. Member for West Belfast (Mr. Arnold-Forster) suggested that I have altered the classification of outrages. There has been no change in the classification whatever. There is all the difference between firing into dwellings and attempted murder. Firing into dwelling-houses is now the favourite crime in County Clare. The serious crimes are murder, firing at persons, killing or maiming cattle, and firing into dwellings. For the last six years the numbers under these heads were—in 1887, 22; in 1888, 18; in 1889, with the Coercion Act in full swing, 27; in 1890, 24; in 1891, 25; and in 1892, 12. Now, the whole weight of the hon. Member's charge against me was that I had released Clare from certain clauses of the Crimes Act, and he mentioned especially the secret inquiry clause. I can tell the hon. Gentleman this—the late Irish Executive held four of those courts of secret inquiry, and in no single one of those four cases did they get such evidence as would justify them in returning a single person for trial. So much for the secret inquiry. I repeat, that in dropping that weapon I was only drop-

ping a weapon which had proved, so far as Clare is concerned, wholly useless in the hands of the late Government. With regard to change of venue, I have no doubt that by suspending that portion of the Crimes Act in Clare or elsewhere we deprived ourselves of the power of changing the venue at will. But we are not quite powerless in the matter of change of venue. If we think it necessary and can establish a proper case, we can go to one of the Superior Courts, and that Court will make an order for a change of venue. Therefore we have not allowed this weapon to fall out of our hands, but it is a very curious thing that even this power of changing the venue was not a very effective weapon, so far as Clare was concerned, in the hands of the late Government. For example, at the last Spring Assizes in Cork in two cases only was a change of venue from the County of Clare thought proper. In one of those cases an emergency man was convicted of firing at one John Moloney, and sentenced to nine months. In this case you had a change of venue and got a conviction; but whether or not you would get a conviction against an emergency man in Clare, I do not know. In the other case a man was tried on a charge of a rape and was acquitted. So that if this year we had used the power of change of venue, which you used last year, and if the same figures held good, we might possibly get a conviction in one case but not in another. The difficulty in Clare is that at this moment, at all events, it is not agrarian agitation which is the root of the mischief. Does anyone suppose that I have got up here to traverse the Judge's statement that the condition of Clare is profoundly unsatisfactory? I do not for a moment advance any such proposition, and I have no desire to conceal anything from hon. Gentlemen opposite, or from the House. There are some forms of outrage and intimidation of the most objectionable kind which undoubtedly show some tendency to increase, but our difficulty arises, as the difficulty of the right hon. Gentleman opposite arose, from the fact that these outrages do not spring from general combination. They are not the result, as the hon. Member seems to suppose, if my information is good, and I believe it is good they are not the result, of any widespread organisation or great general

*Mr. J. Morley*

conspiracy. If such an organisation or conspiracy existed you could break it up. If there were a great criminal organisation you could destroy it. But there is no general conspiracy, there is no general policy in this outrage-mongering in Clare. These outrages are committed by small local gangs of moonlighters for private reasons of their own—for foul reasons, but in private individual cases, but you cannot deal with such outrages in the way that you can deal with a general organisation. The character of this mischief is well understood by those on the spot who are responsible for putting a stop to it, and it is well understood by myself. But you blame me because I have not solved in six months a riddle which the right hon. Gentleman opposite could not solve in six years. You do not make a single suggestion. You indulge in general platitudes, but you have no suggestion to make.

**MR. JAMES LOWTHER** (Kent, Thanet): The Crimes Act.

**MR. J. MORLEY**: The Crimes Act! Why, I have been endeavouring to show that it was when the Crimes Act was in force that these outrages were greater. What is the use of my right hon. Friend's asking me to restore the Crimes Act?

\***MR. JAMES LOWTHER**: I did not myself ask the right hon. Gentleman to restore the Crimes Act. The right hon. Gentleman said no suggestion had been made. I said one had been made—namely, the restoration of the Crimes Act.

**MR. J. MORLEY**: Then the right hon. Gentleman does not wish me to restore the Crimes Act? He has been Chief Secretary himself, and he knows what the difficulties of the Irish Government are as well as anybody else. Well, Sir, that is the situation. You have got a very deep-rooted and intractable disease to deal with in some parts of County Clare. We think we know the root of the mischief. Probably the right hon. Gentleman and I would agree in our diagnosis. He could find no remedy. I do not profess to have found a remedy. All I know is this—and I do not say more, because, after all, this is but a spurious Motion. When I assumed a share of the Government of Ireland I never thought that I could in six months make Clare into a new heaven or a new

earth. All I can assure the House is that the Government are fully alive to their responsibilities, that all the officers concerned are in frequent communication with me and with one another, and that no effort is being spared. New steps are now under consideration; but I do not think that the consideration of these measures, and the effect of these measures in the County of Clare is at all likely to be furthered by such a demonstration as we have had to-night.

**MR. A. J. BALFOUR** (Manchester, E.): With regard to the tone of the bulk of the speech to which we have just listened I have no complaint to make, though I will have something to say with regard to the arguments advanced by the right hon. Gentleman—arguments which were delivered in a moderate and quiet tone. But the beginning and the end of the right hon. Gentleman's speech contained an attack upon the hon. Member who moved the Motion, and upon those who have supported it, which surely is undeserved. Here we have a Judge in Ireland, with all the solemnity attaching to his office, making an utterance of the deepest gravity with regard to the condition of one of the counties in which he has been exercising his functions, and the Representative of an Irish constituency desires to call the attention of the House to the matter, which is undoubtedly a matter of urgent public importance. The right hon. Gentleman thinks it consistent with truth, and consistent with the dignity of his own position, to describe this Motion as a bogus Motion, and to say that the Party which, rightly or wrongly, mistakenly or unmistakably, has been endeavouring during the last six years to enforce the law in Ireland is acting pharasaically when it endeavours to call the attention of the House, and, through the House, the attention of the country, to a condition of things which, whether it be remediable or unremediable, is surely worthy of our most serious consideration. The right hon. Gentleman has given us a great many statistics on the subject of crime in Clare. I do not mean to traverse the statements which he has made. I am aware that he possesses means of information which are not necessarily shared by the House, and I am the last person either to question the



accuracy of the facts of the right hon. Gentleman or his *bona fides* in laying the facts fully and completely before the House. But there is one thing to which I should like to call his attention. The right hon. Gentleman congratulates himself and the country on the fact that there had been no murder in Clare during the six months of his tenure of Office. Sir, it is not the question whether there was a murder or not; the question is, whether there were attempts at murder or not? Whether the object and victim of a dastardly crime was killed or was not killed is very important to him, but it is not a matter of importance for this House when they are considering the condition of the county, for, after all, the escape of the victim of an outrage cannot be due to the condition of the county, but may be the result of bad shooting of the would-be assassin. It would have been much more important for us to know whether there were or were not attempts at murder during the six months with which the right hon. Gentleman has dealt. I must put one question on the subject of moonlighting. The right hon. Gentleman very wisely, in my opinion, has maintained the system of recording crimes which he found in operation when he took Office, in order that there might be some certainty in the records. In my judgment, the system is not a good one, because it often happens that an offence like moonlighting cannot be classed as an agrarian offence—although it clearly arises out of the agrarian agitation, and is undoubtedly connected with the desperate state of the country—unless you can particularly connect it with some agrarian question or dispute. The result is, therefore, that in estimating the condition of the country from those Returns a great deal of the value of the Returns is removed by the system under which they are compiled.

MR. T. M. HEALY (Louth, N.): Why didn't you change the system?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I did not change it for a reason which may come home even to the mind of the hon. and learned Gentleman. I did not change it, because if you change the method of presenting statistics the possibility of comparison between one period and another ceases. For that reason I maintained a system which I did not approve, as I believe the right hon. Gentleman is

maintaining a system of which he does not approve. The fact that under this system offences really agrarian may not appear as such should be borne in mind when an attempt is being made to draw comparisons between one period and another. The right hon. Gentleman, let me observe, is in the habit of dating his responsibility for occurrences in Ireland from August 22nd, when he assumed the reins of Office; but, in my opinion, the new system for which, not the right hon. Gentleman himself, but his Party, are responsible, came into force when it became clear that the General Election had gone against the Unionist Party. From that date Irishmen had to make up their minds whether it was likely to pay best to continue the system of trying to make the Government of Ireland impossible, as far as they could, which they pursued under the late Government, or whether it would not be more conducive to the realisation of their ulterior aims to do their best to aid the new Chief Secretary to govern Ireland under the new dispensation. At all events, let it be recollected that the date on which the new half-year began was the date when the Irish people became cognizant of the fact that a Separatist Government was coming into Office and a Unionist Government going out of Office. Now, I pass to the substance of the right hon. Gentleman's defence. It is this—that though during the late Government certain clauses of the Crimes Act were in operation in Clare, crime in that county was maintained at a certain level, and that he has no reason to believe that any evil results have followed from the repeal of those clauses, because crime remains at the same level. I say that that is a most crude and ineffective method of argument I have ever heard, and I am surprised that the right hon. Gentleman has used it. What were the clauses of the Crimes Act which were in operation in Clare when we left Office? They were, in the main, two—the clause respecting secret inquiry and the clause respecting change of venue. With regard to the secret inquiry clause, the right hon. Gentleman says that it has been tried three or four times in Clare and never produced any result. Sir, there is no doubt that secret inquiry in Ireland is carried on under great difficulty, and is often rendered abortive; but it is also

certain that under special circumstances it has been proved to be of the utmost value, and I want to know on what ground the right hon. Gentleman, knowing that this clause involved no interference with individual liberty, no violation of the principles of his own Party or of any Party, unless there be a Party in the State anxious to shield criminals—I want to know on what ground the right hon. Gentleman repealed this section, which, however difficult to apply, can sometimes be applied with great success. Though the case against the right hon. Gentleman is strong with regard to the clause for secret inquiries, it is incomparably stronger with regard to the clause for change of venue. This brings me to the Charge of Mr. Justice O'Brien, on which the right hon. Gentleman made a speech at Question time, and allowed himself to use expressions which, I think, now he regrets, by which he drew the vassal cheers of his supporters below the Gangway, cheers which are always at the command of any hon. Gentleman in this House who will attack a member of the Irish Bench [*Nationalist cries of "Mathew."*] Some hon. Members make an allusion to Mr. Justice Mathew, an allusion which I would not notice had it not been repeated by the right hon. Gentleman opposite.

MR. W. E. GLADSTONE: I have heard more attacks on Mr. Justice Mathew in the last few weeks than I have heard on the whole Irish Bench in the last 10 years.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I can assure the right hon. Gentleman that he has not heard the last of the attacks that are likely to be made not on Mr. Justice Mathew, but on Sir James Mathew, President of the Irish Evicted Tenants Commission, who himself declared with absolute accuracy that he was not acting in a judicial capacity. When I attack a Judge of the English Bench acting in his judicial capacity there may be some relevancy in the interruptions of hon. Members below the Gangway and the remarks of the Prime Minister. Sir, what was the sum and substance of the Charge of Judge O'Brien which very naturally irritated the Chief Secretary, and which elicited rather unbecoming remarks from the right hon. Gentleman? The sum and substance of the Charge was this: that very few persons were

made amenable, and that where persons were made amenable—though the case against them was absolutely certain—they could not be brought to justice. Here are the words of the Judge in concluding the business of the Assizes—

"Seven cases have been tried before me, representing an infinitesimal part of the crime that has been committed, and with the uniform result that the law has entirely failed to bring the offenders to justice, in spite of every means vigilance and care and zeal could use to attain that result. Every kind of argument and appeal has been made to the jurors, made with zeal and earnestness by the Court itself, to their reason, to their consciences, to their sense of self-respect, and of the common interests of the whole community, to their sense of moral obligations—if such a thing remains—without the least result. I do not know myself what is really the cause of, or what has led to, that state of things. I could hardly suppose the population of this county, or the class from which jurors are taken, are devoid altogether of moral sense, of integrity, or propriety—and they are certainly not devoid of intelligence—as an explanation of what happened; and I am constrained to arrive at the conclusion that it is owing to a certain system of intimidation influencing every single relation in the whole framework of society in this country, and directed to defeat the administration of the law."

Are we to suppose that the juries in Clare have a double dose of original sin, to use the phrase once employed by the Prime Minister—that they are more neglectful of their oaths than the rest of Irishmen; more indifferent to such matters coming near their own interests as security to life and property? No; some less far-fetched explanation has to be found, and the explanation is that in Clare the juror does not do his duty because he dare not, and that the system of intimidation set forth by Mr. Judge O'Brien reaches not only the land-grabber, but the jurymen who are sworn to do justice as between the law and the criminal. As far as I know, there is but one remedy which has been suggested for this state of things, which strikes at the very root of law, order, and civilisation; and that remedy is to remove cases from where intimidation exists and try them where intimidation does not exist. No man knows better than the Chief Secretary that there is no hope of getting a verdict from any common, or even from any special, jury if the trial takes place where the crime has been committed and the crime arises out of agrarian causes. In these cases there are some that I understand arise out of

the Bodyke evictions. Does the right hon. Gentleman suppose that crime committed in connection with the circumstances of Bodyke and tried by jurors from the district would be followed by the conviction of the criminal? He knows that such a trial would be a judicial farce, and the man responsible for that judicial farce is the man who, without any adequate motive, repeals the law which removes this safeguard. The consequences of the policy of the Government are to be seen in other parts of the country than Clare. I have been told of a case where a moonlighter named Dooley was tried under the late Government before a special jury. He was acquitted, or, at all events, the jury disagreed. Further evidence was forthcoming, and it was decided to have a change of venue. The late Government went out of Office. The Crimes Act was repealed, and there could no longer be a change of venue, and, therefore, in spite of the undoubted fact that there was a case against this man, there was a *nolle prosequi* entered. They did not care to send him before a common jury, knowing the inevitable consequences of such action on their part.

MR. J. MORLEY: Where did that take place?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: In King's County, I am informed.

MR. J. MORLEY: That is not Clare.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I was giving an illustration of the general methods of the Party opposite. If my facts are wrong, the right hon. Gentleman will inquire into them. What is the reason which has induced hon. Gentlemen opposite to adopt this fatal policy of removing the whole of the Crimes Act from Ireland? Observe, that the attack made upon my right hon. Friend for having abolished that clause which gives the power of dealing with offences by summary jurisdiction has no relation to the present state of affairs. These moonlighting offences, and the offences to which Judge O'Brien alluded, are not offences that could be tried before a Resident Magistrate. Moonlighting and attempted murder, and that class of offences mentioned by my hon. Friend, never came under the Summary Jurisdiction Clause. Therefore, the *tu quoque* argument against my right hon. Friend

the late Chief Secretary falls absolutely flat. What is the reason which the Government have to give for repealing this section? I listened to the speech of the Chief Secretary on the Debate on the Address, and I listened to him tonight. He has not denied, and cannot deny, that never since Lord O'Hagan's Jury Act, or practically never, have you ever been able to get a conviction in an agrarian case without a change of venue. He must be aware that unless there be some chance of obtaining a verdict crime will stalk absolutely unchecked through the land, and that the only possible control you can have is through any political machinery by which crime may be augmented or diminished at the will of politicians. He knows all this, and yet he abolished that clause. The only ground for doing this that I can imagine is that he thinks Ireland and England should be governed under precisely similar laws. He thinks, I suppose, with the Prime Minister, that because a Bishop in 1799, and an Under Secretary and Mr. Pitt, talked about equal laws—not at all having in their mind the case of a Crimes Act—that, therefore, the Government—this Government—which is to do justice to Ireland, is bound to see that no exceptional legislation exists in Ireland. Is that their reason? Is it some general theory of this kind? It cannot be pretended that justice is better administered without change of venue; but what hypocrisy is this? He knows perfectly well at this moment that he himself is maintaining not only unequal laws in Ireland—he knows perfectly well that, though he has abrogated the more showy and sensational and useful measures of the Crimes Act, he has maintained and is using exceptional legislation for the government of Ireland. I observe from the newspapers that he has in some way modified the action of the late Government with respect to the special legislation for the importation of arms.

MR. J. MORLEY: There has been no modification. It was formal.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I was aware it was formal in this sense: that no substantial change had been made in policy. My point is that he has maintained the policy of the late Government, and those are the men who on every platform have clamoured about unequal

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legislation, who declare that we have violated every pledge said to have been given at the Union, and who are now violating every pledge and every statement which they have ever laid down. That I call hypocrisy. I confess that, as they can reconcile it with their political consciences to maintain that inequality in the law between England and Ireland, it surely might have been well that they should have retained that single section of the Crimes Act by which, and by which alone, there is some chance of bringing to justice the most dastardly form of crime with which even the annals of agrarian crime in Ireland have ever been soiled.

MR. W. REDMOND (Clare, E.) said, he would not have felt called upon to speak in that Debate after the speech of the Chief Secretary had it not been for the fact that he represented the County of Clare, which had been attacked by the Member for South Tyrone. When that hon. Member rose to move the adjournment he (Mr. Redmond) rose to put a question to the Chair, as to whether it was quite consistent with the Rules of that House and the ordinary rules of courtesy for an hon. Member to attack the constituency of another hon. Member without giving the slightest notice of his intention. That question, however, was not in Order, and he therefore regretted having put it at the stage he did. The hon. Member for South Tyrone had not given him notice of this matter, otherwise he would have been prepared to meet it by having consulted all the available records relating to crime in the county. But although they had received no notice that this subject was to be brought forward, the fact that it had been raised in such a manner would surprise no one who knew the attitude the Member for South Tyrone had determined to take with regard to Irish affairs. He declared that this Motion was part and parcel of a plot concocted when it became clear that the General Election would go against the Unionist Party, and the Members of the Opposition had every bit of information which had been brought forward by the Member for South Tyrone before them when almost as the last act they performed before leaving Office they withdrew from County Clare nearly every provision of

the Coercion Act, and it was a notorious fact that this was done by the late Government, in Clare and elsewhere, for the purpose of bringing on a Debate such as that which had been initiated by the Member for South Tyrone in order to cause embarrassment to the present Government. The late Chief Secretary (Mr. A. J. Balfour) had used the word "hypocrisy" as regarded the action of the Government in this matter, but he (Mr. Redmond) declared that no greater act of hypocrisy was ever perpetrated than the action of the Member for South Tyrone and the late Chief Secretary in professing to be shocked and horrified at the state of Clare to-day, when they knew that upon the whole that county was in a better condition than it was when the late Chief Secretary withdrew the operation of the Coercion Act from Clare. It was difficult for Irishmen to know what to do. If outrage and crime existed in Ireland the whole of the Irish people were denounced for it; but if, happily, peace and tranquillity prevailed, they got no credit for it. The condition of Clare had improved latterly, as had the condition of the whole of Ireland, but it was significant that the indignation of the late Chief Secretary had been directed solely against County Clare. And why? Because County Clare was the only county in the whole of Ireland where the Judges of Assize had not had reason to congratulate the Grand Jury on the peaceful condition of the county. It ought to be a matter of pleasure to hon. Members to find that, when the Members and supporters of the late Government came down to the House to attack the administration of the right hon. Member for Newcastle, that out of the whole of Ireland since the Liberal Government came into Office they were not able to place their finger on a single place in Ireland where crime of an extravagant or violent nature existed except in the one County of Clare. The Member for South Tyrone had said there was a great deal of crime in Ireland in the Land League days. Undoubtedly there was, and the reason was plain. The people were suffering from grievances which bore heavily upon them, but when the Land Act of 1881 was passed which removed some of these grievances, crime decreased by leaps and bounds.

In 1883, when crime decreased, the hon. Member would have them believe that this decrease was in consequence of the Coercion Act, whereas in reality it was because the benefits of the Land Act of 1881 were being felt by the people, and exactly in proportion as these benefits were felt crime decreased. Again, the hon. Member said that in 1886 crime increased. That was true; but in that year there was great depression not only in Clare, but in the whole of Ireland, and as a result crime increased; and its diminution in the following year was not because of the Coercion Act which had been passed, but because in 1887 there was also passed a Land Act which removed the grievances which existed in 1886, and which were the consequence of the increase in crime. Anybody acquainted with the history of agrarian crime in Ireland knew that exactly in proportion to the depression of the times that crime had increased; and exactly in proportion as remedial legislation was passed that crime decreased in every part of the country. The hon. Member had drawn a terrible picture of the existence of Secret Societies in Clare, his knowledge of which had been derived from a casual visit to certain parts of the county. Now he (Mr. Redmond) was the Representative of the county; he had knowledge of every part of it, and he could assure the House there was no such deeply-rooted Secret Societies as the hon. Member would have them believe; there was no conspiracy against life and property, and nine out of every 10 of the crimes committed in Clare were attributable to the harsh exactions of the landlords and land agents; and to the fact that the judicial rents fixed 10 years ago had become impossible of payment owing to the depression in agriculture and trade. He himself had always denounced crime; and if he had any knowledge of the existence of any conspiracy against life and property in Clare he should denounce it at once, but he asserted that there was no such conspiracy. He and his colleagues in the representation of Ireland were just as anxious as the Member for South Tyrone and the Member for North Armagh that life and property in Ireland should be protected. As a matter of fact, the men who did most to protect life and property in Ireland and the just rights of the citizens were

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men like the Nationalist Members, who came to that House to give vent to the grievances of the Irish people; and the gentlemen who showed, and threatened to show, the least regard for life and property were hon. Gentlemen from Ulster, who not long ago deluged the streets of Belfast with blood, and who were making speeches at the present time which were calculated to prejudicially affect both life and property in Ireland. Anyone who had listened to the speeches of the Mover and Second of the Motion must have been reminded of the days when those two hon. Members went throughout the length and breadth of the country drawing dreadful pictures to the British people of the state of demoralisation in which the Irish people were, and the Member for Armagh accused the Irish Members of inciting and encouraging murder and crime.

COLONEL SAUNDERSON: Hear, hear!

MR. W. REDMOND: I challenge the hon. Member to state does he mean by his cheers that we Irish Members encourage or sympathise with murder in Ireland?

COLONEL SAUNDERSON: The hon. Member may take any meaning out of it that he likes.

MR. W. REDMOND said, the hon. and gallant Gentleman stated that he considered the Irish Members had encouraged and sympathised with murder in Ireland. All he had got to say was that that was an untruth of a most infamous character, which he did not believe the hon. and gallant Gentleman would have the courage to repeat before him outside that House.

COLONEL SAUNDERSON: Anywhere.

MR. W. REDMOND: And it was one of those remarks which he believed tended more than anything else to show that House the real character of the man who came down to that House, and who did not hesitate for a Party purpose to charge his colleagues and countrymen in the representation of Ireland in being in sympathy with murder and crime. Bitterly as he was opposed to the hon. and gallant Gentleman and his friends from Ulster he would not think of charging them with being in active sympathy with murder, though he did think the speeches made by that hon.

Member and his friends were calculated in the highest degree to lead to breaches of the peace in Ireland. The hon. and gallant Gentleman had made an infamous charge against the hon. Member for East Mayo (Mr. Dillon), his insinuation being that the murder of Head Constable Whelan in what was known as the Sexton affair followed immediately after, and was the result of a speech of the Member for Mayo. But what were the facts? At the trial an informer named Cullinane admitted that he was in the pay of the police, that he himself had concocted the whole of the attack on Sexton's house, which resulted in the unfortunate death of the head constable, and duped the other men to take part in it. This informer admitted that he had been over and over again convicted of the most infamous crimes. And this was the case which the hon. and gallant Gentleman cited when he endeavoured to prove that murder had been committed in Clare at the instigation of the Member for Mayo and other Irish Representatives. He thought it was a sorry sight—a miserable spectacle—that any Irishman, much less an Irish Representative, could be found who, for the sake of Party purposes, would come down to that House, denounce his own country, run down his countrymen, and endeavour to make English and Scotch Members believe that the Irish people were lost to a sense of civilisation, and were given over to crime and outrage of every kind. The object of the Member for South Tyrone in bringing forward that Motion was patent. It was for the interest of the Unionist Party to try and make out that crime and outrage existed in Ireland; and after going through every one of the 32 counties in Ireland, they had not been able to find anything to complain of except in this one County of Clare, which they now dangled before the House with the view to showing that there was no security for life and property in Ireland. As he had said, he disapproved of crime as much as any man, and he had never scrupled to say so, but he totally denied the existence of such serious crime in Clare as the hon. Member had alleged existed. It was all very well for the hon. Member to quote Returns; but it had long been the practice of the authorities in Ireland to report under the heading of agrarian crime matters of the most

trivial character, and an analysis of the present Returns would show that there was very little real crime. It was not fair to place so much weight on the representations of the Magistrates and Grand Jurors of County Clare, who were almost entirely composed of landlords and Unionists, and whose motive in meeting and condemning the state of Clare was caused not by anything extraordinary in the state of Clare, but by the fact that the Prime Minister had introduced his Home Rule Bill. The state of things was not worse, but better, than it had been some time before, yet the coincidence could not be overlooked that these Magistrates took no action until the introduction of the Home Rule Bill. The object at the bottom of that discussion was not to bring about an improvement in County Clare, but to hamper the Government in passing their measure of Home Rule, and nothing would more delight the Members for South Tyrone, North Armagh, and other ardent supporters of so-called law and order than to see the same disturbances which were alleged to exist in Clare taking place in every other part of Ireland so as to obstruct the Prime Minister in his policy. Coercive and repressive legislation did not put a stop to crime, but ameliorative measures did; and he was convinced that before long the Chief Secretary would be able to show that not only had crime greatly decreased in Clare, but that there was general contentment amongst the people as the result of the policy introduced by the Government with reference to Ireland. Taking ordinary crime, and leaving agrarian crime out of the question, they would find that Clare was freer from crime than any county in England and Scotland in proportion to its population, and the same remark applied to the whole of Ireland. What crime there did exist in Ireland arose out of the agrarian difficulty, or out of a state of affairs which did not exist in England or Scotland. Outrage and crime existed in Clare because for long years the people had been treated unjustly, had been dragooned by officials, and taught to believe that no justice or fair-play could be expected from the governing authorities. Place the law in a position to be respected, let it be administered by a Government in which

the Irish people could have confidence, and the law would be obeyed and verdicts found as readily in Clare, and in Ireland generally, as either in England or Scotland. In the meantime, until they definitely settled the Land Question, and relieved the people from the judicial rents fixed 10 years ago, and which they could not now pay, they would not strike at the root of the evil. The people of Clare had been attacked, but he ventured to think that if a similar state of affairs had existed in the North of Ireland as existed in Clare the Members who now supported this Motion would have said little or nothing about it. As the Representative of people who had been attacked in a most hypocritical manner in that House, he declared that the people of Clare were as anxious to maintain law and order as any other people, provided they were given a fair opportunity of doing so.

Question put.

The House divided:—Ayes 215 ; Noes 260.—(Division List, No. 17.)

**SUPPLY — CIVIL SERVICES AND REVENUE DEPARTMENTS, 1892-3 (SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES).**

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

**CLASS I.**

Motion made, and Question proposed:

"That a Supplementary sum, not exceeding £3,000, be granted to Her Majesty to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March 1893, for certain Re arrangement of Rooms in the Houses of Parliament Buildings."

\***MR. R. G. WEBSTER** (St. Pancras, E.) said, he would like to say a few words on the Vote and move a reduction. The changes that had been made in the rooms of the House were by no means to the advantage of Members generally. They were chiefly made to convenience hon. Gentlemen on the two Front Benches. For example, the Whips had been very largely considered. The Committee was appointed to deal with the matter so that additional accommodation might be arranged for the Business in connection with this House ; but, except in so far as the Whips were concerned, nothing of a satisfactory character had been done. The Surveyor of the Board of Works was called before the Committee, and

he advised that a larger number of rooms should be provided. He advised, in the first place, that the Hansard Room should be in another part of the House. The consequence was that that room had been removed to another and a most inconvenient part of the House. He had the utmost difficulty in finding where the room was. He had to go down a circuitous staircase and several dark passages before he could discover it. He regretted that Mr. H. M. Stanley had not been elected to the House, as, had he been, he could have assisted them to explore the passages leading to this new room. A Member might have to go to that room during a Debate, and, not hearing the Division Bell, might be shut out from the Division. Again, until now they had five Deputation Rooms. The number had been diminished by two or three. Hon. Members who were supporting and opposing a certain measure, the Direct Veto, for instance, might have to receive these opposing deputations at different ends of the same room, or rather, passage. Then there was a very useful body of men, the Members' secretaries, who had now only one room set apart for them, and it was not adequate for their requirements. Mr. Taylor, the Surveyor to whom he had alluded, pointed out before the Committee that there were two rooms not allocated. One of these rooms had been appropriated to gentlemen who took notes for the newspapers in the Lobby, but he understood that there was no furniture in it, and it was absolutely useless for the purpose for which it was intended. Mr. Jenkins stated that there was no place where Civil servants attending under the Gallery in order to aid Ministers in any business which might be before the House could arrange the important papers. Mr. Jenkins was allowed to go into the Public Bill Office for that purpose, but that was by the courtesy of the head of that office. Men in the high position of those gentlemen, who attended to instruct the Ministers of the Crown, ought not to be subjected to such inconvenience. The whole of the £3,000 spent on the alterations had been more or less thrown away, because, he believed, the expenditure was of a temporary character. The House of Commons and its offices were constructed at a time when the pressure of Public Business and the

*Mr. W. Redmond*

attendance of Members were a great deal less than they were now. Out of the 670 Members of the House there were often 600 present. That was not the case in former days, for the Business was then a great deal less than at present. Whether they were or were not to retain the Irish Members, there was in reality not sufficient accommodation for the transaction of the Business of Parliament. Before spending any more money on these makeshift arrangements, the question ought to be looked at in a much broader and more comprehensive spirit. A Committee sat in 1867 and 1868 to inquire into the matter, and they found that the pressure was very great, because at that time a Reform Bill was before the House. But at the present time a vast number of burning questions came before the House with kaleidoscopic rapidity. The Committee of 1867-68 reported that the accommodation of the House was inadequate, and there had been no improvement since then—

\*THE CHAIRMAN (Mr. MELLOR) : The present Vote is for alterations recommended by the Select Committee of 1892, and we cannot go into what happened long ago—in 1867 or 1868.

MR. WEBSTER said, it was regrettable that the Committee of last year did not have before it the Report of the Committee of 1867 and 1868. Mr. John Taylor, and he thought also Mr. Palgrave, were no doubt examined before the Committee of last Session, but he held that the scope of the Reference to the Committee would have allowed them to consider the whole subject of accommodation in a broader aspect before recommending the expenditure of £3,000, or any other sum, on these petty and mainly useless alterations. He did not deny the removal of the bar had, no doubt, improved the look of the Members' Lobby, but it was like one of those puritanical pruderies of the Radicals who objected to public-houses being open till 12 p.m. because they were *en evidence*, but allowed bogus clubs to be open all night for drinking purposes, if they were hid from sight. He ventured to say the Committee should have gone into the matter at length, and considered all the details. He did not desire to disobey the ruling of the Chair, but in his opinion the expenditure had been absolutely wasted,

and he begged to move the reduction of the Vote by £100.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That a sum, not exceeding £2,900, be granted for the said Service."—(Mr. Webster.)

MR. J. PARKER SMITH (Lanark, Partick) said, there was one class of gentlemen for whom a great deal had been done, and it was a class for whom he had often expressed his admiration—he meant the Whips on both sides; but he felt that these alterations had been made simply in the interests of the Whips, and of nobody else. It was their business to look after the Members of the House, but in this case they had certainly looked after No. 1. A very serious responsibility rested on the hon. Member for Peterborough (Mr. A. C. Morton) for an alteration which had been made at his instance—he meant the removal of the bar from the Lobby to a more private place, which must have encouraged secret drinking. He thought it had encouraged secret drinking, and he should move for a Return in order to ascertain what had been the increase in the consumption of liquor which had taken place in the Lobby now that Members did not take their refreshments under the observance of the public eye. Members now had to push a door open as was necessary in the "jug and bottle" department of a public-house. With regard to the accommodation in the Conference Rooms, it was most inadequate. Strangers who came to the House to confer with Members could either be seen in the Lobbies or the Smoking Room (where many gentlemen strongly objected to an atmosphere of tobacco and whisky-and-water), or they might be taken into one of the little Conference Rooms. These rooms, however, as now arranged, were most uncomfortable. They were really only passages through which people were constantly moving to and fro. He thought a more satisfactory arrangement should have been made; in fact, before proceeding to improve the accommodation of the Whips, a little more comfort should have been provided for the House generally. During the summer strangers could be taken outside on to the Terrace, but it must be remembered that for two-thirds of the year our climate made walks on the Terrace almost impossible. The



House of Commons had been called the best club in the world, but to his mind it was the most uncomfortable, as it was the most expensive club for strangers to visit. He thought there was room for improvement in the accommodation for Civil servants, and he was also of opinion that, instead of being turned into the Lobby leading to the Central Hall when the Division Bell rang, these gentlemen should be allowed to go into the Members' Gallery. Then the members of the Press (as Mr. Shaw, of the Press Association, had pointed out in a letter to the Serjeant-at-Arms) had ground for complaint in the entire absence of accommodation for them to write out their notes in the Lobby. They had a room, but it was a considerable distance from the Lobby. This building was a vast one; but whenever accommodation was wanted in it for any purpose they were told, "Oh, there is not a room anywhere." The fact was, there was plenty of room, but the arrangements were imperfect. He should be out of Order if he endeavoured to raise the larger question of the accommodation in the House generally; but what had been said to-night showed how necessary it was, if there was to be any comfort outside this Chamber, that there should be a more perfect utilisation of the space than had entered into the minds of the Chairman and Members of this Committee.

MR. BARTLEY (Islington, N.) regretted that he could not raise the whole question of the re-arrangement of the space in the building. The Committee had been appointed to consider "the re-arrangement of rooms;" therefore, he should have thought it would have been competent for a Member to go into the general question. It seemed to him that the Committee had lost a great opportunity of dealing with the whole question. What they had done was anything but satisfactory for the convenience and accommodation of Members, and the amount expended had been great and quite out of proportion to any advantage which had accrued. He did not think the accommodation was at all too good for the Whips, particularly the Opposition Whips. As for the Conference Rooms, they were a scandal to the House, and would not be tolerated in a second-rate house of business. They were not fit places for Members to re-

*Mr. J. Parker Smith*

ceive deputations from their constituents in. In regard to the Lobby Refreshment Bar, though he did not make use of it much himself, he asserted that it was a most inconvenient place. It had been put into a back corner, and was a hot, stuffy room, and the only advantage the Temperance Party had secured by the re-arrangement was the ornamentation of the back of the Bar with a large number of empty champagne bottles advertising the fact that that beverage might be purchased there. Everyone would admit that the alterations were not advantageous, and that the Conference Rooms were very uncomfortable, and, coming to the question of expense, as a Representative of the taxpayers he protested against £3,000 having been spent on these alterations. There was evidently something quite wrong in the way in which these affairs were looked after. The accommodation of Members was a matter of great concern to them, and it was a matter of comparative unimportance whether it cost £3,000 or £6,000 so long as it was all that it should be. As a matter of fact, however, the Committee had only recommended two or three little changes on the fringe of the subject, and had succeeded in making Members more uncomfortable than they were before. It was idle to say that what was suitable 40 or 50 years ago was suitable now, and he must say he thought the Committee had wasted a great opportunity. He should support his hon. Friend in his protest against this Estimate, and trusted that a Division would be taken.

\*SIR J. GOLDSMID (St. Pancras, S.) said, he had taken great interest in this question, and had found that the two Front Benches utterly ignored the convenience of private Members. It did not concern them at all. They had private rooms reserved for them in the House, and every other accommodation. But it did concern private Members like the hon. Gentleman behind him (Mr. Parker Smith) and himself, who were nearly always in their places, and who spent a great deal of time within the precincts of the House. The other day, with two other Members of Parliament, he had to receive four gentlemen. To find a room they had to go a long way, and before commencing their business they had to

disturb several other sets of gentlemen. Though they only occupied half an hour with their conference, they were interrupted 9 or 10 times. To his mind, the changes which had been effected were a disadvantage, and to call them "improvements" was an absurd misnomer. With regard to the removal of the Hansard Room, he had not up to the present time succeeded in finding the new office. It was not a convenience to private Members to have this office where nobody could find it, though, no doubt, it might be a convenience to Ministers by preventing Members from making references and obtaining quotations. Then there was the question of access to the bar. It was absurd that the means of getting at the bar should be through a door through which two Members could not pass conveniently at the same time. When a Member got through the door he had to push through several other Members, and the apartment was so small that, according to the best calculation, not more than 12 or 14 Members could stand there together. He trusted that the bar would be replaced in the position it formerly occupied. So far as he had been able to see, everything that had been done for the "improvement" of the House had been to the disadvantage of private Members, and the only thing that had been gained by the expenditure of £3,000 was the provision of better rooms for the Whips. He quite agreed that the House ought to afford the Whips reasonable accommodation, but he did not see why other Members should suffer because the Whips were treated properly. The Committee ought, in his opinion, to mark its sense of the mistake that had been committed by voting the reduction of the Estimate. The general convenience of the House had not been consulted, and the money had not been well spent.

\*MR. PLUNKET (Dublin University) thought it only fair that as he was primarily responsible at the time when the Committee on whose Reports these alterations were made held its sittings, he should explain the nature of the task that had been assigned to that Committee. He did not himself concur altogether in the criticism which had been passed upon the alterations carried out. With regard to the Hansard Room downstairs,

he might point out that it was not as far from the door of the House as was the old Hansard Room, and, as to Members not being able to hear the Division Bell there, he was quite sure that if such were the case the First Commissioner of Works would at once see that the matter was set right. With regard to the new Conference Rooms, his recollection was—although he could not speak with certainty on the point—that the cubic space of the rooms was the same, or was almost identical with that of the old rooms. Of course, it would be much more agreeable if there were abundant space to dispose of for the convenience of Members; but the present Deputation Rooms were, it must be remembered, an improvement of recent times, no such rooms having been provided in the old days at all. He wished to call attention to the fact that the Reference to the Committee of last year precluded it from dealing with the larger questions as to the future arrangement of the House which had been brought forward during the discussion. The Committee were asked to consider the arrangement of the rooms contiguous to the Members' Lobby, and had nothing to do with anything else. It had been said that the work had already been carried out with the object of giving greater convenience to the Whips of the various Parties. He could assure hon. Members that that was not the purpose for which the Committee sat at all. The main object was to arrange the Members' Lobby itself; and he was bound to say that, whatever the convenience or inconvenience of the present arrangements were, there had been an enormous improvement in the appearance of the Lobby, and there was now considerably more space than there used to be for the use of Members. The main object was to get rid of the Refreshment Bar, which then stood in the Lobby, and to arrange the Post Office and the other rooms in a more convenient way. The recasting of the Whips' Rooms was a mere accidental circumstance which grew out of the alterations. He claimed that, as far as the main object was concerned, the Committee had been very successful. As to the expense, he did not think that for the changes which had been made the sum of £3,000 was at all excessive. Two witnesses had been examined by the

Committee. One of these was Mr. John Taylor, of the Office of Works, than whom the House could not have had a more competent adviser, and who had for many years past succeeded in greatly conducing to the convenience of the arrangements of the various rooms, and adding to the comfort of Members who had to spend a considerable time in the House. Many of the criticisms which had been made appeared to be entirely new. He could not say he shared in them, and he believed that, generally speaking, the changes which had been carried out had given satisfaction to Members.

\*MR. A. C. MORTON (Peterborough) said, he did not desire to occupy any further the time of the Committee with this matter, but he might say that he was glad he had introduced it. His sole object was to secure economy. He had no objection to providing rooms for the use of the Whips; but the interests of other Members of the House ought to be considered. He did not blame the present Commissioner of Works so much; he was not responsible. The late Commissioner was the official who had charge of the Committee; but, unfortunately, they had to remember that the present Commissioner was in reality the official responsible to Parliament. He admitted at once that he (Mr. Morton) might be responsible for the alteration in connection with the bar—responsible so far as appearance went; but he was not inclined to be dissatisfied, because he found from what had been said that night that hon. Members could not always get into the bars at present constructed, and, from the point of view of temperance, that was a great advantage. On the whole, the change spoke well for the advance of temperance principles in the House. Any change that had taken place was a change for the better. They had heard that the change might—and, in fact, it had been said did—lead to secret drinking. That might be in some cases; but how did the hon. Gentleman who spoke of secret drinking know anything about its going on? However, what he was mostly concerned in was the question of economy, and he wanted to know from the Government how much more these

works were likely to cost? What were they going to do with the money voted last year and not spent? £320 had been provided for double windows in the Members' Dining Room and other rooms; but the windows had not been provided, and he assumed the money had not been spent.

THE CHAIRMAN: That is not included in this Estimate, and cannot be discussed.

\*MR. A. C. MORTON said, that was so, but when a sum had not been spent it should be returned to the Treasury, and not spent on other objects without the consent of the House of Commons. He was entitled to speak on the question of economy, and he was anxious to have the actual cost, and he would like to know also from the right hon. Gentleman when he replied whether the Bar Room which had been provided was to be supplied with whisky and intoxicating liquors only?

An hon. MEMBER: No; lemonade.

MR. MORTON said, they were entitled to have tea and coffee provided in that place for those who did not indulge in whisky drinking. If they supplied tea and coffee those who went into the bar might be induced to take either one or the other instead of whisky—and it would be much better for them. That was one of the reasons why he rejoiced at the removal of the bar from the Lobby. Its removal meant the removal of temptation from Members; and he was sorry to say it was within their knowledge and they were aware that the bar in the Lobby had been the ruin of some Members of the House. He was most anxious that the bar should be removed. Having done that, they should go further and supply tea and coffee. The right hon. Gentleman the First Commissioner would say that he had nothing to do with supplying tea and coffee, but the right hon. Gentleman had provided the means of supplying both, and he (Mr. Morton) hoped they would be supplied. In these days of temperance they in the Parliament of Great Britain should set an example to the rest of the country. He would only say, in conclusion, that he hoped the right hon. Gentleman

would be able to give some satisfactory reply to questions which had been put to him.

**THE FIRST COMMISSIONER OF WORKS** (Mr. SHAW LEFEVRE, Bradford, Central): The hon. Gentleman asks one or two questions which I think I can answer to his satisfaction. In the first place, he wants to know whether all the work is included in the Estimate. Yes; all the work to be done is included in the Estimate that is now before the House. The sum mentioned will complete the works indicated last year.

**MR. A. C. MORTON:** Furniture and all?

**MR. SHAW LEFEVRE:** Yes; furniture and all. I think, altogether, the result has been most satisfactory. It might have been better; but hon. Members will be glad to hear, in regard to the Refreshment Room, that since the bar has been removed the consumption of liquor has been much less than it used to be. Whether that is due to the change of Members effected at the General Election or to the moving of the temptation further from the Lobby I cannot venture to say; but, Sir, the fact remains. I shall do my best for the accommodation of hon. Members, but it must be remembered that a large portion of this building is set apart for private residences. The number of these private residences may be reduced, especially those occupied by officers of the House of Lords. When I was Commissioner of Works previously I made great efforts to obtain possession of the house occupied by the Librarian of the House of Lords, who did not reside there, but I was unable to do so. Anything I can do shall be done, and I hope the House will pass the Vote without further discussion.

**THE MARQUESS OF CARMARTHEN** (Lambeth, Brixton) said, he joined in the objections that had been advanced against these alterations. The Front Benches had been attended to, but no one else. The way to look at the matter was this: One right hon. Gentleman on the Opposition Bench spent the money, and the right hon. Gentleman on the Treasury Bench was responsible for

it. To say that the money had been well spent was not true. The appearance of the House had not been beautified, and the convenience of Members had not been considered. The Whips had been considered, of course, but the Conference Room was a standing disgrace to the House, and whoever had been responsible for the work had done nothing but waste money. Then the bar change had been objected to. He could not but think that a great deal of money had been thrown away.

**MR. JOHN BURNS** rose in his place, and claimed to move, "That the Question be now put;" but the CHAIRMAN withheld his assent, and declined then to put that Question.

Debate resumed.

**MR. TOMLINSON** (Preston) said that the accommodation in the Conference Room was very bad. He did not know what suggestion to make, but he thought they ought to have a Committee to go into the whole question of the accommodation in the House.

**MR. BARTLEY** said that the extreme haste of some new Members was rather indecent. It did not pay to closure any of the Estimates. He had received no answer from the First Commissioner to the questions he had asked, and unless some change in the arrangements for private Members were made he should raise the question again on the general Estimates.

**MR. JOHN BURNS** rose in his place, and claimed to move, "That the Question be now put;" but the CHAIRMAN withheld his assent, and declined then to put that Question.

Debate resumed.

**\*MR. JAMES LOWTHER:** I would say, Sir, that for an hon. Member of such very limited experience to persist with his Motion for the Closure, notwithstanding the well-merited snub he has received from the Chairman, is an incident which demands the emphatic condemnation of the Committee. The hon. Member should remember that he is not in the London County Council.

MR. BURNS: And neither is the right hon. Gentleman on Newmarket Heath.

\*MR. JAMES LOWTHER: The hon. Member will have to endeavour to behave himself according to the Rules of the House, and that remark applies also to the hon. Member's friends who join with him in disorderly cries. The Estimate is £3,000 in excess of the sum originally voted, and that excess is of a very alarming character. For my part, Sir, although the expenditure is limited in comparison to other expenditure on behalf of the nation, I look upon it as relatively great, and we should see that we have something in return. Of course, I am aware that the excess and the whole sum was expended under the advice of a Committee of the House—a Committee composed of gentlemen pre-eminently qualified to form an opinion. I think, however, there were many things the Committee might very properly have considered. Taking this building as a whole, there is no great public work that has been executed at a greater cost and with a less satisfactory result, having regard to the object intended to be carried out. The Palace of Westminster affords the most inadequate accommodation for those who assemble within its walls to discharge their legislative functions, and it has always appeared to me to be an instance of peddling penny wisdom, not to say pound folly, these enormous sums which have been expended with a net result so extremely unsatisfactory. Reference has been made to the inadequate accommodation afforded by the new Conference Room. The Conference Room, which should really be called a room for interviews and deputations under the old arrangement, was by no means satisfactory, but I think the room provided for these purposes under the new re-arrangement is much worse. The present so-called Conference Room is no Conference Room at all. The accommodation it affords is totally inadequate; it cannot hold a fair-sized deputation, and, to my mind, it is a disgrace to the House of Commons. I do not wish to use any harsh expression towards the Committee which recommended this re-arrangement

of the rooms, for I suppose they were in the position of having to make bricks without straw, but I cannot help saying that they have made the original bad arrangement much worse. I impress upon the First Commissioner of Works that in the interest of Ministers themselves, as well as in the interest and convenience of Members generally and also of persons who are not Members of this House, that an adequate Conference Room, where deputations can be satisfactorily received by Ministers, is an absolute necessity. Indeed, the whole question of the accommodation outside this Chamber for Ministers, and for Members with private secretaries, and who wish to have private interviews with constituents or with draftsmen, or with people on private business affairs, should receive the anxious attention of the Government. The First Commissioner of Works, in the course of his remarks, referred to the fact that the private residences of officers of both Houses of Parliament occupied a considerable amount of space that might be made available otherwise. These remarks seem to me to have been misinterpreted by some hon. Members. I did not understand the right hon. Gentleman to have specially directed his observations to the officers of the other House. I took his remarks as general, and as suggesting that some re-arrangement of the residential portions of the Palace might be properly considered when the matter is dealt with on the whole, as I hope it will be on an early date. This used to be called—and I always considered it a fiction and a figure of speech—the best club-house in London. To my mind, there is no pot-house in Europe so badly provided. For instance, the accommodation for writing is wretched. I have frequently wandered through the rooms and through the lobbies seeking for a vacant seat at the writing tables, and I have found the greatest difficulty even to get sufficient room to write a couple of lines or address an envelope on my knee. I do not think that is right in the House of Commons. I think that in this building there ought to be every facility afforded to Members to enable them to discharge their duties to the House without being compelled to neglect their own private affairs. I find that amongst the

new re-arrangements which have been effected is the allotting of a room to the Whips, so-called, of one section of the Irish Party. We now appear to have embarked on the Continental system of groups rather than of Parties, which I do not at all regret, because the stereotyped two opposing lines of Party-hacks is by no means an ideal condition of affairs in politics, and I am not at all sorry that the group system is about to prevail. The various groups will require accommodation for their Representatives, and as a beginning I suppose a room has been apportioned to one of the sections of the Irish Party. I am told that that room discharges functions not usually assigned to the rooms of Whips. I am told that if this room, on which a portion of the £3,000 now under consideration has been spent, is examined—and as the First Commissioner of Works has the right of entry into every room, I would suggest to him the exercise of his powers in regard to this particular room—if it be examined it will be found to present an appearance more suggestive of the establishment of Messrs. Lincoln and Bennett, one of the great hat emporiums, than a Whips' Room of the House of Commons, and I understand it is devoted to the active interference with the privileges of Members of this House. I am told that these hats have not been collected for the purposes of sale. I believe there is no barter or commerce connected with the transaction, but I understand that on a given signal, on certain occasions, one of the persons having *entrée* into this room selects a number of these hats, walks into this Chamber, and distributes the hats on the Benches below the Gangway, thus involving a breach of the Standing Orders regulating the obtaining of seats. That is a matter which I commend to the consideration of the First Commissioner of Works as a matter affecting the privileges of Members of this House. This room, for which we are asked to pay for in this Vote, is now used for the contravention of the long-established principles of courtesy upon which the relations of Members stand in this House. It has always been considered that Members of long-standing, or of many years' service in this House, should be allowed to occupy certain seats, or corresponding seats, at the other side of the House, as

Parties changed places. Of course this position—as the Speaker said early in the Session—rests not so much on Standing Orders or Rules, as on the general good sense and good feeling of Members; but when we find an Estimate submitted to us by the Government for an expenditure of £3,000, a portion of which has been spent on a room which has been used for the purpose of furthering the contravention of the long-established usages and courtesies of the House of Commons, I think it is time that the matter should be discussed. What does this departure from the usual courtesy of Members come to? It comes to this: that Members who have occupied seats for over half a century have been deprived of these seats. Take my own case. I am sorry to say I have been a Member of this House, on and off, for 27 years. It is close on a quarter of a century since I first represented a Public Department—

**MR. CREMER**; I rise to Order. I wish to know whether the question the right hon. Gentleman is discussing is pertinent to the Vote under consideration?

**\*THE CHAIRMAN**: I must say I think the right hon. Gentleman is wandering from the subject. The Supplementary Vote is all we have to consider.

**\*MR. JAMESLOWTHER**: Of course, Sir, you are quite right, and I bow to your ruling. If I had gone into this question as a question of courtesy between Members, I would undoubtedly, to some extent, have gone rather near the mark in regard to the Vote; but I was careful to point out the actual fact of the allocation of this room, and in that I was distinctly in Order, as the hon. Gentleman opposite who interrupted, and who has had only a few years' experience in the House, will get to know.

**MR. LITTLE (Whitehaven)**: I rise to Order. I wish to know, Sir, is the right hon. Gentleman observing the ruling of the Chair in debating this question on this Vote?

**\*THE CHAIRMAN**: I have already pointed out to the right hon. Gentleman that I think he is wandering from the

Vote. I do not say that his references to this particular room are out of Order, but I do think that his references to the use the room may or may not have been put to is apart from the Supplementary Vote.

\***MR. JAMES LOWTHER :** Of course, I shall not labour that side of the question. I desire always to support the Chair, but the hon. Gentleman who interrupted me can scarcely have read the Report of the Committee, or the evidence given before the Committee, or else he would see that the room which has been allocated to the uses of the Whips of the Irish Party comes under this Vote. I must protest against this attempt to muzzle the House of Commons. I can tell hon. Gentlemen opposite that we do not intend to be muzzled, and I, for one, do not intend to take my instructions as to the laws of Parliament from those who have little or no experience of Parliamentary life. As to this Vote, there is a widespread feeling on the part of Members of all Parties in the House that we must have additional accommodation provided. It is a matter that can no longer be delayed. Here are 670 Members of this House. We demand that the convenience for the discharge of their duties should be provided in a generous spirit.

**THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY** (Sir J. T. HIBBERT, Oldham) : I can assure the House, and particularly the right hon. Gentleman who has just spoken, that I do not desire to muzzle any hon. Member, but I wish to make an appeal to the Committee that we have now discussed this Vote for two and a half hours, and we ought to proceed to a Division. Most of the speeches we have heard have been delivered by private Members, who have asserted very strongly their grievances with respect to the accommodation afforded by this House. I can say that I very much sympathise with the grievances which have been expressed by these private Members. We have heard the cry of private Members for better accommodation, and I trust the time is not far distant when this question will be considered, so as to provide better accom-

modation not only for Ministers and for occupants of the Front Opposition Bench, but for all Members of this House. Much has been said about the re-arrangement of the accommodation provided for by this Vote, and fault has been found with the way these rooms have been allocated. But I wish to point out that my right hon. Friend the First Commissioner of Works merely carried out the arrangement which had been provided for by his predecessor in office on the suggestions of the Committee, and I am sure he will be quite willing to consider, especially with respect to conferences, whether a better room could not be provided for the purpose. It is very desirable in all our interests that, when we have conferences with persons coming on business, we should have a proper and satisfactory room for the meeting, and I hope before long we shall be able to have that room. Great fault has been found with my right hon. Friend for his references to the House of Lords. I do not think these references were at all intended in the sense imputed. What my right hon. Friend said was that there was a room or rooms for the Librarian of the House of Lords which were not used by that officer. I do not see there was any harm in drawing attention to the fact that these rooms were unoccupied, and that they ought to be made use of for the accommodation of Members of this House. We all desire the same thing whether in Office or out of Office, and that is to make the House as comfortable as possible for every Member attending it. I trust, therefore, that as this question has been discussed long enough we may be able to take a vote on the Amendment before the House and proceed to Business.

\***MR. WEBSTER** said, the right hon. Gentleman had given a pledge that the Government would consider carefully the accommodation of what were called private Members, but whom he described as Members of this House. At the same time, they considered that this £3,000 had not been spent in the way they thought it ought to have been spent—for the benefit of the Members of the House; and as they were determined to carefully consider the Estimates, and not to allow money to be wasted—as he was grieved

to say it was wasted by other Public Bodies in this Metropolis—they would, as a protest, go to a Division.

\*MR. CREMER (Shoreditch, Haggerston) said, he wished, first, to say that it was not through want of courtesy or any desire to be disrespectful to the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. James Lowther) that he just now rose on a point of Order; and he had not the slightest desire to attempt to muzzle the right hon. Gentleman, because if there was any one man in the House whom he would not like to attempt to muzzle it was the right hon. Gentleman. The question under consideration was not what experience one had had, whether a Member had been here for three or 13 Parliaments; it was a question of common sense. First of all, he wanted to call attention to the composition of the Special Committee, to which some allusions had been made. The question of the composition of the Committee seemed to him an exceedingly important one. It was proposed, if he remembered aright, by the predecessor of the right hon. Gentleman in Office, and therefore he was responsible for its composition and Report. Let anybody take the list of that Committee and read it.

\*THE CHAIRMAN: I think I must call the hon. Member's attention to this: that the composition of the Committee is not in question. The only question for the consideration of the Committee is the expenditure of this £3,000.

VISCOUNT CRANBORNE (Rochester): On the point of Order, Sir, I submit to you whether, as this money is being voted upon the recommendation of the Committee, the hon. Member's remarks are not in Order?

\*THE CHAIRMAN: The composition of the Committee was the act of the House. The question here is the action to be taken on the Report of that Committee.

\*MR. JAMES LOWTHER: I think what he ought to do is to confine himself to showing—[*interruption.*] On the point of Order, I take it I am right in saying that while it is not in Order to go into the

original appointment of the Committee, the hon. Gentleman is distinctly in Order in discussing the Report.

\*THE CHAIRMAN: Two hours ago I laid down that point of Order, and the only reason I rose to interrupt the hon. Gentleman is this: he seemed to be going a little too far, and into the composition of the Committee.

\*MR. CREMER, resuming, said he would content himself with saying that as the Committee was constituted no other result was possible, as there was not a practical man upon it. As long as the House contented itself with appointing mere theorists upon Committees, they could not expect any other result. There were practical men in the House acquainted with buildings from foundation to roof, but not one of them was invited to sit upon the Committee. With regard to the results which had followed, he had not yet found a Member of the House who approved of them. The Conference Room was simply a disgrace. It was inconvenient enough before, but it was much more inconvenient now, after the money had been spent upon it. The Bill Office was placed in a part of the building where it was nearly impossible to find it. But the real cause of all the difficulties in this matter was the fact that upwards of a third of this enormous building was occupied by permanent officials; and before anything satisfactory could be done for the convenience of hon. Members some of those officials would have to be dispossessed, and the rooms they now occupied placed at the service of Members. Two years ago it was stated in this House that the Librarian of the House of Lords, although a bachelor, had no less than eight bedrooms at his disposal, while hon. Members could scarcely get a corner of space to discuss matters with their friends. He did not know whether he would be in Order, but there was another question upon which he felt strongly. He was afraid the Chairman would rule him out of Order, and if he did he would sit down immediately. That question was the accommodation, or the want of accommodation, that was afforded Members of the House in the Dining Room of the building.



\*THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member will not be in Order in referring to that matter.

MR. A. F. JEFFREYS (Hants, Basingstoke) rose to speak, and was met by cries of "Divide!"

MR. JOHN BURNS rose in his place, and claimed to move, "That the Question be now put."

\*THE CHAIRMAN: I was unable to accept the Motion of the hon. Member for Battersea to the same effect upon the first and second occasions, because I thought this was a matter in which many Members took an interest, and that it would not be proper to close the discussion. I think now that it will be unnecessary to accept the Motion of the hon. Member, because I think the Committee is ready to come to a decision upon it.

MR. JEFFREYS: I only wanted to ask if I should be in Order on this Vote in alluding to the lighting of the Library and the Reading Room?

\*THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member would not be in Order.

MR. F. G. BANBURY (Camberwell, Peckham) said, he would like to say a few words with regard to the expenditure of this money. When he came into this House in August last there was a bar in the Lobby, and since then it had been moved. He did not know whether there had been any increase of convenience to Members by the moving of the bar, or whether there had been a saving of expenditure to the nation. He presumed that some hon. Gentlemen opposite who were in favour of teetotalism had benefited by the removal of the bar. [*Cries of "Divide!"*] He moved to report Progress.

THE CHAIRMAN: I decline to put that Question.

MR. BANBURY said, he simply wanted to ask whether it was worth while at considerable expense to move the bar from the position which it occupied last August to the position which it now occupied?

MR. T. R. BUCHANAN (Aberdeenshire, E.): On a point of Order, Sir, I desire to ask whether it is competent

for an hon. Member to deliver a second speech on the same subject?

\*THE CHAIRMAN: In Committee an hon. Member may speak twice.

MR. BANBURY, continuing, wished to point out that the majority of the House were not in any way benefited by the removal of the bar.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Question be now put."—(*Mr. John Burns.*)

The Committee divided:—Ayes 223; Noes 134.—(Division List, No. 18.)

Question put accordingly,

"That a Supplementary Sum, not exceeding £2,900, be granted to Her Majesty to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March 1893, for certain re-arrangement of rooms in the Houses of Parliament Buildings."

The Committee divided:—Ayes 120; Noes 250.—(Division List, No. 19.)

Sir JOHN HIBBERT claimed "That the Original Question be now put."

MR. BARTLEY: On the point of Order, Sir—

MR. BROMLEY - DAVENPORT (Cheshire, Macclesfield): Mr. Mellor, Sir, I would like to explain I rose to a point of Order. As I understand, the right hon. Gentleman opposite moved "That the Question be now put," and I wished to ask whether he was in Order in making that Motion?

\*THE CHAIRMAN: I could not then allow the hon. Member to say anything. What the right hon. Gentleman said was that he claimed that the Original Question should be now put, which is the proper form.

Original Question put accordingly, and agreed to.

£5,500, Supplementary, Diplomatic, and Consular Buildings.

DR. CLARK (Caithness) regretted that he could not support this Vote, which he considered to be a more important matter than the original Vote. Before the year 1890 the Consular Buildings in Cairo were rented at £400 a year. About four years ago, instead of paying a rent of £400, they thought it

better to have a building of their own. The estimated cost of the land was £3,000, and the estimate for the building to be erected was about £20,000. After that they had an Estimate for £30,000, which was to include the land, the erection of the building, and the furniture; but this year the Estimate had been increased from £30,000 to £39,000, and he supposed they would have to get a third Estimate. In 1891 they voted £9,000; in 1892 £17,519; and in 1893 they voted £7,519, making, in all, with the present Estimate, about £40,000. Already they had spent over £30,000, and this new Vote was not £5,500, because if they looked at the bottom they would see there was £8,000 more; and if they estimated that at 4 per cent. they would find that the cost was not £400 a year, as formerly, but £1,600 a year, and it would be very likely £2,000 before the thing was finished. They originally got an Estimate that they were going to get a place built for themselves at a cost of about £20,000. Since then the Estimate had been twice revised. They were spending £1,000 beyond that, and still the place was not finished. He thought it was time the House of Commons should prevent this throwing away of money. It was time when they had an Estimate that should be an honest one, and a good reason should be given why an Estimate should increase from 50 to 100 per cent. He did not know why this extravagant policy should be pursued, unless they were going to annex the country. He should like to hear some reason why all this money had been spent already, and how much more they wanted before they finished these Consular offices. A few years ago they got on very well with a cost of only £400 a year for these offices.

\*MR. SHAW LEFEVRE: The original Estimate for providing the site, building, &c., of Consular building at Cairo, was £30,000, and it is now certain the cost will be about £39,000, of which £38,000 is provided for in the original Estimates and the Supplementary, leaving about £1,000 for next year. I venture to say, however, that will complete the entire work. This excess of £8,000 or £9,000 is due to a variety of

causes, some of which were not anticipated at the time the original Estimate was before the House, and another part is in respect of further demands made by Lord Cromer and assented to by the late Government. Difficulties that have arisen since, and which were not expected at the time, were of this character: First, the Local Authority at Cairo raised the levels of the road near the new residence, and that necessitated larger and more costly works in the erection of the building. Secondly, it became necessary to embank the Nile in front of the building. Then, again, Lord Cromer made further demands for increased accommodation, which were agreed to by the late Government. There is a further addition to the cost of the building, the exact cause of which I am unable to tell the Committee, because the Clerk of the Works, who was to have reported on this point, has been unable to do so through illness; all we know is that this increased cost will be incurred and the money provided for it in this financial year. We do know that the cost will amount in the whole to £39,000 instead of the original £30,000, and that this £8,000 or £9,000 excess is due to the causes I have stated. It appears that in erecting the house it was found impossible to make a contract for the whole building. The building has been erected under an arrangement of schedule prices, under which, from time to time, there is somewhat of an uncertainty as to the cost; but I am able to assure the Committee that the total cost will not be more than £39,000, and I believe that £1,000 is all that will be required in the Estimates for next year.

\*MR. A. C. MORTON desired to support his hon. Friend the Member for Caithness (Dr. Clark) as to the cost of these buildings; but before making a few remarks on that matter, he wished to call attention to another item in the Vote, and that was the appropriation in aid. The hon. Member for Caithness had said the real Vote was £8,000 and not £5,500, but, in the first place, he found it was made up with £600 taken from other sources. Then £500 was deducted for appropriations in aid; therefore, dealing with that question alone,

they were not asked to vote the actual sum, even with regard to the other £2,000, but to vote a less sum because some other sum was brought into the account and deducted, which had nothing to do with the matter, and that put forth to the public that they were spending less money than they were spending. Last Session the right hon. Gentleman who was now the Chancellor of the Exchequer (Sir W. Harcourt), and another right hon. Gentleman, now the President of the Local Government Board (Mr. H. H. Fowler), protested against the then Government putting the Estimates before them in that way, because they said it was an improper and untruthful way of putting the Estimates before the Committee and the country. He did not wish to be too hard upon the new Government with regard to these Supplementary Estimates, but he wished to know from the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he was going to stick to his guns and present the Estimates to them not in the form they were presented to-day, but in the way he suggested they should be put last Session—"Question!" The hon. Member said "Question," but he was dealing with the £500 which was in the account now before them. He was raising the question on this Vote in order to give them fair notice that when they had the regular Estimates he should expect them to be made out in the way the Chancellor of the Exchequer said the late Government ought to have made them out. Now, he wished to make a few remarks about the cost of this Consular Building. The country was told some years back that the building, site, furniture, and everything would only cost £30,000; but now they were told it would cost £39,000; and probably there would be a few more thousands added to that; therefore, he should not be wrong if he said the cost would be over £40,000 before they had done with it, because the right hon. Gentleman had not told them whether the £39,000 would cover the furniture.

**MR. SHAW LEFEVRE:** It will.

**MR. A. C. MORTON** was glad to hear that; but he might take it at present that it would cost £40,000, and this was the third increase upon the Estimate.

*Mr. A. C. Morton*

This was a charge, of course, against the late Government more than the present Government, but they ought to have better Estimates than that; the Estimates ought not to be exceeded by 30 per cent. It was unfair to come to the House of Commons and the Committee and say they would build this residence and furnish it complete for £30,000, and afterwards be told they wanted £39,000. When they voted £30,000 they considered that should be all the money required. The right hon. Gentleman told them part of the excess had occurred through having to make some new road levels, and that another extra was in consequence of having to embank the Nile. He ventured to say that unless some old woman made the estimate and not a professional man, both these questions—the embanking of the Nile and making up the roads—ought to have been thought of when they made the Estimate, and it was no excuse at all that the persons they employed were so ignorant of the ordinary professional duties of architect or surveyor that they never estimated the embankment or the making up of the road. He said, therefore, that was no sufficient excuse. He knew it was no use carrying this very far now, because the money was probably expended, but he wished to bring about a better state of things in the future. There was another objection he had to this Vote, and that was this: It said the real cost was £8,000, "less savings on other sub-heads £1,000." He entirely objected to this, whatever Government was responsible for it. They were told by the late Chairman of Ways and Means (Mr. Courtney) that it was wrong to take the money voted for one matter and use it for another; therefore, he objected to the taking of this £1,000, which was voted for other matters altogether and under other sub-heads. He objected to their taking this money without getting the consent of this Committee. He was told that in the case of the Army and Navy Votes money voted for one purpose might, with the consent of the Treasury, be devoted to another, but with regard to the ordinary Estimates the Government had no right to spend money voted on one sub-head for an entirely different purpose. He would, therefore, ask the Government

in future to put these Votes fairly and squarely before the Committee—let the Vote be £8,000, and let the savings under other heads be returned to the Treasury as they ought to be, if not expended for the purposes for which they were voted. He understood they had got an assurance that this building would not cost more than £39,000, but they would carefully watch the matter. But he should like to ask the right hon. Gentleman how it was the officials did not understand their duties better than to forget the embankment of the river and the making of the roads when they gave the Estimate? He hoped the Chancellor of the Exchequer would give him some assurance as to using these appropriations in aid, otherwise he might have to discuss it upon every Vote. He saw it occurred in almost every case, and in some cases to very large amounts indeed, to over £100,000; therefore, he should like an assurance with regard to the matter.

\*SIR W. HARCOURT: My hon. Friend will find when the Estimates are presented there are no new appropriations in aid this year.

DR. CLARK said, he had been to the Library and now had the Estimates for last year. On page 28 of those he found that the revised Estimate then was for £30,000. There was a further sum of over £3,000, so that £33,000 had been spent at that time. £9,000 were spent in 1891, £17,000 in 1892, and £7,000 last year, which made £33,000, and in addition there was £8,000, making £41,000 spent already. If they took the three years during which they had been voting this money they would see an expenditure—the first year of £9,000; the second of £17,000; the third of £7,000. How long was this to continue, and what did it mean? If they examined the figures they would see that they were always 50 per cent. above what they were estimated originally. It might be said the French had a better Consulate than they had, but when they had a statement of policy they might then understand that. He was not going to attack any policy upon this point; he would leave that until the Speaker was leaving the Chair on the general question of Supply, and perhaps then the Government would tell them what their policy was. The financial aspect of the question was now before

them, and perhaps the right hon. Gentleman was not responsible for it. The real responsibility rested with the right hon. Member for Dublin University (Mr. Plunket). For his part, he would vote against the Vote. The Chancellor of the Exchequer last year objected to appropriations in aid. Would he now stand to his guns?

MR. SHAW LEFEVRE: Referring to the excess over the original Estimate, I would point out to the hon. Gentleman that that was due to circumstances over which we have had no control. The Supplementary Estimate makes up £39,000; and although we may go to £40,000, my belief is that we shall not exceed the £39,000. I will take care, at all events, that the expenditure is as low as possible. On the whole, I do not think we shall exceed the £39,000.

SIR J. GORST (Cambridge University): I think, Sir, I can say that if the right hon. Gentleman voted or spoke last year against appropriations in aid, the Member for Peterborough may be assured that the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer will not stand to his guns. The right hon. Gentleman did not stand to his guns last Session. Although he and the right hon. Gentleman the President of the Local Government Board upon a particular night last Session made a furious attack upon the appropriations in aid, and afterwards put a notice upon the Paper with regard to the matter, yet they never brought that Motion on, because they found upon further inquiry that the appropriations in aid were introduced into the Estimates in consequence of a long practice which was sanctioned by the Committee of Public Accounts. They also found that one of the largest appropriations in aid was introduced into the Estimates in consequence of the suggestion of the Secretary to the Admiralty, at that time Chairman of the Committee of Public Accounts. When the Estimates were produced for the present year, I said that in every single Vote in which appropriations in aid were usual in the past year it would be found that appropriations in aid were asked for this year. The Chancellor of the Exchequer nodded his head, and therefore I must be

right. I can tell the Member for Peterborough that if he intends to stand to his guns and says he adopts this view about the appropriations in aid, he will have a very heavy task before him.

MR. A. C. MORTON said, he did not know anything about the Chancellor of the Exchequer nodding his head in assent to what had fallen from the right hon. Gentleman, but he hoped they were not going to have appropriations in aid this year.

SIR W. HARCOURT: I merely said there should be no new appropriations in aid.

\*MR. A. C. MORTON said, he did not quite understand that at present. He knew, however, that last year the right hon. Gentleman was in favour of keeping all appropriations in aid out of the Estimates, and he approved of the humour he was then in. To deduct appropriations in aid was neither an honest nor a straightforward course. They had no right to tell the House that they wanted £5,500, when in reality they wanted £8,000. He distinctly said that he would stick to his guns upon this question. He was sure it was not an honest or a straightforward way of putting accounts before them. He had not heard any reply to his remarks about the economy that might be effected. It was impossible for hon. Members to find out the items they wished to discuss. The only way for them to detect the defects or the flaws in the figures was to make a careful study of the Appropriation Account and the Report of the Auditor General. It was only in this way they could find it out at all, if there was anything wrong. The Radicals were supporting this Government, and he hoped they would have the courage to inquire into these matters. He asked for some little explanation about the money voted for one purpose and then applied to another.

\*MR. T. GIBSON BOWLES (Lynn Regis) said, before the Vote was submitted to the judgment of the House he would like to ask who and what this Agent in Egypt was? Was he to be there for a temporary purpose, or was he

*Sir J. Gorst*

to be withdrawn on the day they of England evacuated Egypt? If he was to be a temporary Agent the case would be met by furnished lodgings. If the Government had a case for a permanent agency they would be able to justify the spending such a large amount as this; but not if they should, on the other hand, early redeem their promises with regard to the evacuation of Egypt. They were giving the Vote under a wrong impression if this residence was to be used, and if public work were to be done for the benefit of the Egyptians alone, such as the embankment which had been spoken of. Was this embankment a temporary one? This was a very important Vote. It raised the whole question of the continuance of the temporary occupation of Egypt—

THE CHAIRMAN: The only question before us is the question of the Supplementary Grant.

MR. BOWLES: But surely the whole thing turns upon the character of the Agent, and whether he is entitled to have this residence?

\*THE CHAIRMAN: The question is this: Whether the Committee is prepared to grant the excess sum asked for by the Government. The original purpose was sanctioned by Parliament at the time, and all that is asked now is a sum which was not voted before. The question is: Is this sum excessive or not under the circumstances?

MR. J. CHAMBERLAIN (Birmingham, W.): I rise to a point of Order. I beg to ask you, Sir, whether I have correctly understood your ruling? You have, as I understand, stated that by the original Vote the House sanctioned the principle of the Vote, and that now we have only to discuss whether the excess is reasonable or not. What I wish to ask is this: Have we not also the right to discuss the principle of the Vote upon this demand upon us for an additional sum?

\*THE CHAIRMAN: I cannot think that upon a Supplemental Vote—*[Interruption]*—any principle of general policy can be involved. The House of Commons sanctioned the building of a residence. The Supplemental Estimate asks for an additional sum. It is not com-

petent for an hon. Member to go into a question of general policy upon this Supplemental Vote.

\*MR. BOWLES regretted that his limits of action were so circumscribed.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR : I rise upon a point of Order. The ruling which I understand you, Sir, to have given is of such importance that I should like fully to appreciate it. Do I understand you to rule that upon a Supplementary Estimate the policy involved in the original Estimate is not open to be discussed? That is a novel principle, and we ought clearly to understand it.

\*SIR W. HARCOURT : I would ask you, Sir, to lay down a principle for our instruction upon these Estimates, and I would put this case:—Supposing a Supplementary Vote is put down, say, for £200 for the drains of the Foreign Office, would it be a proper occasion to raise the question of the whole foreign policy of the Government?

\*THE CHAIRMAN : Upon a Supplementary Estimate such as this the question of policy is not involved, and cannot be discussed.

\*MR. JAMES LOWTHER : The question which we desire your opinion upon is, not whether the whole foreign policy can be raised, but whether, upon a Supplementary Estimate, it has not always been held to be perfectly in Order to discuss the original Estimate?

MR. J. CHAMBERLAIN : Hear, hear!

SIR J. GORST : I rise to ask a question upon a point of Order. Is it not the usual practice of the Chair of this House to rule only on concrete cases, and not upon general principles?

MR. SEXTON : I rise to a point of Order. In view of the combined attack that is being made to embarrass and intimidate the Chair—[*Cries of "Order, order!" and "Withdraw!"*]

SIR J. GORST : I rise to a point of Order. [*Cries of "Order!"*]

MR. SEXTON did not resume his seat.

MR. T. W. RUSSELL rose—

SIR J. GORST : I rise to a point of Order.

MR. SEXTON : I am in possession of the House.

SIR J. GORST (still standing) : I rise to a point of Order.

\*THE CHAIRMAN : I understand that the right hon. Gentleman the Member for the University of Cambridge rose to a point of Order, which he conceived arose out of the speech of the hon. Gentleman.

SIR J. GORST : I wish to ask whether it was in Order for an hon. Member to attribute to other hon. Members of this House combined action to intimidate the Chair?

\*THE CHAIRMAN : I did not hear the hon. Member distinctly, but I understood the hon. Member to point out to the House that there was a general disposition to rise to Order upon this particular question, and I understood the hon. Member was about to address himself to that question.

MR. SEXTON rose again.

\*THE CHAIRMAN : Mr. Sexton. [*Cries of "Withdraw!"*]

MR. SEXTON again attempted to speak, but was met with cries of "Withdraw!"

\*THE CHAIRMAN : I hope the Committee will allow the hon. Member to proceed.

MR. WEBSTER : I rise to a point of Order. Is it in Order, Sir, for an hon. Gentleman—[*Cries of "Sit down!" and "Name!"*]

\*THE CHAIRMAN : Mr. Sexton.

MR. WEBSTER : Mr. Mellor, I rise to Order. Is it in Order for an hon. Gentleman—[*Interruption.*]

VISCOUNT CRANBORNE : I rise to a point of Order. [*Cries of "Name!"*] Is it in Order for—[*Interruption.*] I beg to call attention to the fact—

\*THE CHAIRMAN : The Member for Belfast—[*Cries of "Kerry!"*] The hon. Member for Kerry is in possession of the House.

VISCOUNT CRANBORNE : I must ask—[*Cries of "Order!"*]

\*THE CHAIRMAN : Order! I say the hon. Member for Kerry is in possession

sion of the House, and it is only fair he should be heard. [*Cries of "Why did he insult us?"*]

COLONEL SAUNDERSON: He has insulted us. Withdraw!

\*THE CHAIRMAN: I did not understand the hon. Gentleman to insult any one.

MR. SEXTON: I am entitled to hold the opinion I have expressed. ["Withdraw!"]

Several MEMBERS rose.

\*THE CHAIRMAN: Order, order! The hon. Member is in possession of the House. He originally rose to Order, and has not completed what he was about to say.

MR. WEBSTER: He has insulted the Conservative Party.

\*THE CHAIRMAN: I think it only fair, before any comments or remarks are made upon what he said, the hon. Member should be heard.

SIR E. ASHMEAD - BARTLETT (Sheffield, Eccleashall): He repeated the insult to the whole Conservative Party.

\*THE CHAIRMAN: Nobody understood what he intended to say.

COLONEL SAUNDERSON: He repeated it. He has no right to insult the House.

MR. HULSE (Salisbury): I rise to a point of Order.

MR. SEXTON also rose.

\*THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member must understand there is only one point of Order. It is impossible to think the Committee can appreciate the importance of this point of Order until it has heard what the hon. Member in possession of the House has to say. I call upon the hon. Member for Kerry.

MR. SEXTON [*Cries of "Withdraw!"*]: I can tell the hon. Member for North Armagh that I did not withdraw what I said about him once before.

MR. J. CHAMBERLAIN: Is that a point of Order?

\*THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member for Kerry will be good enough to confine himself to the point of Order.

MR. SEXTON: I am not allowed to proceed, Mr. Chairman.

*The Chairman*

MR. HULSE: I rise to a point of Order. [*Cries of "Name, name!"*]

THE CHAIRMAN: There can be only one point of Order. The hon. Member for Kerry rose to a point of Order, and it is only right that the hon. Member should be heard.

COLONEL SAUNDERSON: The hon. Member has no right to insult us.

THE CHAIRMAN: I have to repeat—and I am quite sure the whole Committee will see the importance of it—that if an hon. Member rises to a point of Order he ought to be heard. The hon. Member for Kerry is in possession of the House, and I hope the House will hear what he has to say.

MR. SEXTON: I beg to ask you, as a question of Order, the point having been raised before you, whether upon a Supplementary Estimate for the erection of a building, and the Main Vote having already been determined by the House, and you having more than once given a clear and specific ruling, you will permit your ruling to be made the subject of further discussion?

MR. WYNDHAM said on this point of Order he wanted to ask if, in the interval between the decision of the last House and the House now sitting there had been a change of Government which had placed a right hon. Gentleman in Office whose views upon this question were in doubt, so that many hon. Members were not sure that their policy in Egypt was the policy which was pursued by the House which sanctioned the original Vote—if then this Supplementary Estimate was in true continuation of the Vote to which the House of Commons had given its assent?

\*SIR W. HARCOURT: I would venture to appeal to the House, after what has taken place in the last quarter of an hour, that what has taken place has not been to the advantage of Public Business. I understand that the Chairman of Committees has made a ruling. Whether hon. Gentlemen agree or not, I would venture to submit that when the Speaker or the Chairman of Committees makes a ruling upon a point, it is to the advantage and credit of this House that the ruling should be accepted, and that we should

not proceed on one side or the other to debate the ruling of the Chair.

**SIR H. JAMES (Bury, Lancashire):** I am sure we shall all be disposed to agree with the Chancellor of the Exchequer that hon. Members should abide by the ruling of the Chair; but I think, Sir, your ruling is of such very serious importance that you would yourself wish we should not hastily pass away from it as a matter of principle. I should like very respectfully to ask whether I have a right to point out on a Supplemental Estimate of, say, £20,000 to an original Vote of £5,000, that the £20,000 ought not to be granted because the original Vote of £5,000 has not been properly expended? If you rule that the first Vote of the sum of £5,000 governs us, however great the Supplementary Vote may be, we must hold our tongues. What you have laid down now is so important to the privilege of Parliament that if it is persisted in no Supplemental Estimate can ever be brought forward again. With all respect to your ruling, I think, Sir, that you yourself must wish this matter should be determined. I would therefore suggest that the proper course would be to report Progress—I do not propose to move to report Progress myself—and ask the Speaker to rule whether we are to be deprived of the constitutional right on a Supplemental Estimate of showing that the original Estimate should not be added to.

**\*MR. JAMES LOWTHER:** I did not understand your ruling to go the extent my right hon. Friend declares. I understood it to be, as the Chancellor of the Exchequer puts it, that in a particular Supplementary Estimate for a Foreign Office building it is not possible to discuss the whole foreign policy of the country. I did not understand you to preclude our raising on a Supplemental Estimate the question of the policy of the original Vote.

**\*THE CHAIRMAN:** What I meant to rule, and what I think I did rule, was that it was not competent for any hon. Member of the Committee on the Supplemental Estimates like this to raise questions of policy. In addition to that, I pointed out that the Vote for purchase of this Agency house had been sanctioned by

Parliament, and that, therefore, the policy of sanctioning or providing an Agency house could not be questioned. But I certainly never ruled, and never meant to rule, that it was not perfectly competent to the Committee to say that no more money should be spent because the previous money had not been properly spent.

**MR. A. J. BALFOUR:** As I understand it, Sir, you have ruled that the policy of the original Vote cannot be discussed on the Supplemental Estimate. That, I venture to say, is a new ruling. ["Order!"] I do not say it is wrong, but it is new.

**SIR W. HARCOURT:** It has been ruled again and again.

**MR. A. J. BALFOUR:** Never. It has never been ruled that the policy involved in the original Vote cannot be re-discussed on the Supplemental Vote.

**\*SIR W. HARCOURT:** Yes; over and over again.

**MR. A. J. BALFOUR:** Never. I should hope, Sir, that that does not represent the ruling you would wish to put before us. Before further proceedings are taken on that point, I suppose I am now in Order in asking you to call upon the hon. Member for Kerry to withdraw the statement he made when, under cover of rising to a point of Order, he accused hon. Gentlemen in this House of a combined attempt to intimidate the Chair. You, Sir, ruled, and I have no doubt ruled correctly, that there could only be one point of Order before the House at one time; but now that the hon. Member for Kerry has furnished what he described as his statement, I hope you will order him to withdraw an imputation which certainly, I think, was unparliamentary and should not have been made in reference to any Members in this House.

**\*THE CHAIRMAN:** Two appeals are made to me, and I will deal with them in their order. I did not understand the hon. Member for Kerry to impute—perhaps I did not hear what he said—to hon. Members what would have been something in the nature of a conspiracy—[Several hon. MEMBERS: "He used those words"]—a conspiracy to intimidate the Chair. I need hardly say that if I had so understood him I should have



called upon the hon. Member for Kerry to explain or withdraw what he had said. Several hon. Members rose to Order, and I was anxious to hear what the hon. Member had to say. With regard to the other point, I want to make myself perfectly plain upon the question of a Supplemental Vote. I understand the rule which has been laid down on several occasions to be that you cannot, on a Supplemental Vote, which is a mere addition, go into questions of policy; and I also understand that where a Vote has been sanctioned by Parliament to this extent, we will say that Parliament has desired that a Resident's house should be provided in Cairo, the propriety of providing the house is not to be questioned on a Supplemental Vote. But I never meant to suggest that Members of the Committee could not contend that the house was worthless or that more money had been spent upon it than ought to have been spent, or that more money should not be granted in respect of it on the Supplemental Vote.

MR. J. CHAMBERLAIN: From that explanation it results very clearly.

MR. T. M. HEALY: I rise to Order. [*Cries of "Order!"*]

MR. J. CHAMBERLAIN declined to give way, and both Members remained standing for some time amidst loud cries of "Order!"

THE CHAIRMAN called upon Mr. Chamberlain.

MR. T. M. HEALY: I rise to Order. [*Loud cries of "Order!" and interruption.*]

MR. J. CHAMBERLAIN still refused to give way, and Mr. HEALY remained standing and repeating "I rise to a point of Order."

THE CHAIRMAN: As I understand, there is no point of Order now before the Committee. Mr. Chamberlain!

MR. T. M. HEALY: I propose to raise a new point of Order. I wish to ask—[*Loud cries of "Order!" and interruption.*]

THE CHAIRMAN: The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Birmingham rose upon the matter before the Committee, and I think the right hon. Gentleman ought to be heard.

*The Chairman*

MR. J. CHAMBERLAIN: It results clearly from your ruling, Sir, that no Member of this Committee on a Supplemental Vote for a particular Service would be entitled to call in question the whole policy of the Department. I do not think, Sir, there is the slightest difference of opinion in reference to your ruling upon that matter. But there is a second point on which I am bound to say that I do not understand you. When a Supplemental Vote is taken on a particular Service some of us have understood that it would always be competent for us upon the Supplemental Vote to raise the question of the policy of the original Vote, not, of course, the whole policy of the Department. I quite understand it would be impossible for us on a Supplemental Vote for the Diplomatic and Consular Service, for instance, to raise the whole question of the foreign policy of the Government of this country; but upon the Vote before the Committee at present for the provision of Agency buildings in Cairo, some of us have hitherto understood that it would be possible to raise the question of the original policy of that Vote. I may point out how the matter may arise. It might be that circumstances had changed entirely between the time when the Vote was sanctioned and the time when the Supplemental Vote is demanded. Or, again, it might happen that the Parliament had changed, and that the Parliament which sanctioned the original Vote was altogether a different Parliament from the Parliament called on to sanction the Supplemental Vote. Under the circumstances, it seems to me unlikely that you intended to rule that the new Parliament should not be permitted to revise the position of the old Parliament. Now, it so happens in the present case that the policy of erecting Consular buildings in Cairo was decided by the last Parliament, and the present Parliament may take a totally different view of that policy; and it appears to me that, according to all previous rulings, they would be entitled to discuss that policy as well as the extremely small question of whether the policy being granted, the proceedings under the contract were such as would command their approbation. I have endeavoured

to put the case clearly before you in order that you may, if you see fit, give any further explanation to show clearly whether it is or is not your intention to rule that, whether or not the Parliament is the same, it would be impossible for any Parliament to discuss the policy upon which the original Vote has been sanctioned by a previous Parliament.

SIR W. HARCOURT: Mr. Mellor, I would ask you what is the question now before the House? For three-quarters of an hour we have been doing a thing which in my Parliamentary recollection I cannot recall. We have been debating with great heat the ruling of the Chair. I venture to submit to the House most respectfully that if such a practice as that is to obtain the House of Commons can do no Business whatever. If the House of Commons is not prepared to accept the ruling of the Chair without a protracted and heated Debate, the whole order of the proceedings of the House of Commons is at an end; and I do implore hon. Gentlemen on both sides not to encourage the continuance of such a Debate as this, but to accept the ruling of the Chair and proceed to discuss the Vote that is before them.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Chairman do report Progress, and ask leave to sit again."—(*Colonel Sanderson.*)

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I am sure the whole House will agree with the right hon. Gentleman that the scenes like those of the last quarter of an hour are to be deprecated, and that every respect should be shown, and I am sure will be shown, to the ruling of the Chair. But I cannot agree with the right hon. Gentleman that what we have been engaged upon is disputing the ruling of the Chair. That certainly is not what has occurred in the speeches of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Birmingham and the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Bury.

\*SIR W. HARCOURT: Debating the ruling of the Chair.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: We are anxious primarily to discover precisely what that ruling is. It is evident that a question of the gravest import is now

before us—the liberty of this House to discuss upon Estimates the policy involved in those Estimates. That is one of the dearest of our privileges. Unquestionably, that privilege ought not to be stretched, so neither ought it to be curtailed. We are only anxious to know whether you, representing after all the traditions of this House in the matter of our liberties in Committee of Supply, are giving a ruling which those of us who have had experience of this House for many years are inclined to think will greatly curtail the liberties we have been in the habit of enjoying. I should like, if I may, to repeat the precise question on the point of Order put by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham. No claim, as I understand it, has been raised for discussing the general policy of a Department upon a Supplementary Estimate in connection with the particular expenditure in that Department. All we ask, I will not say claim—all we venture respectfully to put before you—is this: that, according to the immemorial practice of this House, it has been permitted to its Members on a Supplementary Estimate to discuss the policy of the original Estimate to which that Estimate is supplementary. I would ask you, by way of illustration, whether, if the last Parliament had voted £5,000, we will say for the construction of a railway to Uganda, and this Government were to propose an expenditure of £200,000 for the same purpose, we should be precluded on the Supplementary Estimate from discussing the policy of such an expenditure. We may be mistaken, and I hope and believe we are mistaken, in thinking that the ruling you have given from the Chair would make that extraordinary curtailment of our immemorial privileges; but, at all events, whether we are right or whether we are wrong, we do think it necessary that a perfectly clear decision should be given by you on this important question.

\*THE CHAIRMAN: I think it would be advantageous that I should remind the Committee of what took place at the time I interposed, for it seems that that has been entirely lost sight of in the discussion that has taken place. Unquestionably, the matter is one of importance. I do not deny that it is;

but at the time when I interposed I distinctly understood that the hon. Member who was then speaking was about to open up the whole question of the Egyptian policy. I may have misunderstood him. He was speaking of a temporary occupation of Egypt and of a permanent occupation of Egypt; he was raising in various forms what appeared to me to be the policy of the Government, a matter which is not, and has never been, considered to be open in a Supplementary Estimate. I can only assure the Committee that I am the last person in the world to seek to curtail the privileges of the House of Commons. I am only endeavouring to administer the law as I find it, and, as I am bound to do, rule upon questions arising, to the best of my ability. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham has put to me what seems to me to be the exact point; and I think that probably, when he has heard all I have to say, that there will not be very much difference between the view he takes and the view I have endeavoured to explain to the Committee. I am distinctly of opinion that no question of general policy can be raised on these Estimates. I think there can be no doubt about that; and what is more, I venture to submit to the Committee that it is most desirable, in the interests of the entire House and of the country, that the Debates on these Supplementary Estimates should be kept strictly to the point; that is to say, that the time of the House should not be spent on anything approaching a fruitless discussion. But while I endeavoured to distinguish between questions of general policy, I never went so far as the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Manchester seems to think. I did not hold that in this Supplemental Vote it could not be argued that the Agency house was worthless. I cannot go so far as to say that merely because there has been a dissolution of Parliament every question of policy can be re-opened on the Estimates. I draw myself a very clear and distinct difference between questions of general policy and the question opened on this Estimate. Having endeavoured to explain myself to the Committee, I sincerely hope that the discussion upon the matter itself may be allowed to proceed.

*The Chairman*

MR. T. GIBSON BOWLES: With your permission, Mr. Mellor, I will now resume the remarks with which I was endeavouring to assist the Committee to come to a prompt decision on the Vote. The Vote is for part of the cost of a house for an Agent, and, if I may be allowed to explain, what I was endeavouring to open up was not the character of the policy of Her Majesty's Government, but the character of the Agent for whom the House is intended, as bearing on the question of whether we are justified in voting such a house for such an Agent. I submit, Sir, that the character of the house depends entirely upon the character of the Agent for whom it is intended. If you have one kind of Agent you would be justified in voting one kind of house; but if you have another kind of Agent, another kind of house would be needed. I submit that that is the sole question—the character of the Agent—that I endeavoured to discuss. If I am not permitted to discuss the house, nor the Agent, nor the Acts which created the Agent, I would ask, “What may I discuss? May I discuss any part of this £6,000? If not, why do I sit here?” [*Cries of “Order!”*] I ask myself that as a serious question. When I came to this House I was charged by my constituents as one of my first duties to watch over the expenditure of the money of the taxpayers. I find, however, that on the first Vote of the first Estimate I am closed, and that on the first Vote of the second Estimate, when I endeavour, to the best of my ability, to give reasons why this £6,000 should not be voted to build this agency house, I am brought up by points of Order and interruptions which have entirely driven my arguments out of my mind. I wish to disclaim altogether any desire to stop any appropriate expenditure of money. I think I am justified in asking whether, inasmuch as the person for whom this house is required, is a temporary official on a temporary Mission, and not a permanent official on a permanent Mission (the Mission being one that is to be withdrawn in as short a period of time as possible), the expenditure of this large sum is not entirely out of place?

SIR J. FERGUSSON (Manchester, N.E.): I would submit to my hon. Friend that this Vote should be allowed

to pass. The policy of the Vote was fully discussed in the last Parliament, and it was then abundantly shown that the character of Her Majesty's Agent in Egypt was of such importance that he ought to be properly lodged and able to support the dignity of his nation. Whether the military occupation of Egypt be long or short, it never can be the case that the British Agent will not occupy a very important position. The larger question of the occupation of Egypt is not now involved. I venture to think that this Vote ought to be passed. It will by no means destroy the right of hon. Gentlemen to discuss at any future time our policy in Egypt.

Vote agreed to.

Motion made, and Question, "That the Chairman do report Progress, and ask leave to sit again,"—(*Mr. Tomlinson*), put, and agreed to.

Resolutions to be reported To-morrow, at Two of the clock.

Committee to sit again To-morrow, at Two of the clock.

#### BUILDING SOCIETIES (No. 2) BILL. (No. 167.)

SECOND READING. [ADJOURNED DEBATE.]

Order read for resuming Adjourned Debate on Question [16th February], "That the Bill be now read a second time."

Question again proposed.

Debate resumed.

**MR. JACKSON** (Leeds, N.): I understand that it is the intention of the Government to refer this Bill to a Select Committee, and I desire to know whether it is intended to give the Committee power to take evidence? I hope the Government will also refer to the Committee the other two Bills on the same subject.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Debate be now adjourned."—(*Mr. T. W. Russell*.)

**THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT** (*Mr. Asquith*, Fife, E.): I trust that the hon. Member will not persist in his Motion. With reference to the question which the right hon. Gentleman has put

to me, it is the intention of the Government to refer this Bill to a Select Committee, with power to take evidence. It is not our intention to oppose the Second Reading of either of the other two Bills; and if the House consent to give them a Second Reading, I should propose that all three be referred to the same Committee. I hope the hon. Member will not press the Motion for Adjournment.

\***MR. SPEAKER**: It is adjourned by the clock. [It was striking 12.]

It being midnight, the Motion for the Adjournment of the Debate lapsed, and the Debate stood adjourned.

#### COINAGE (No. 2) BILL.—(No. 221.)

COMMITTEE. [*Progress 27th February.*]

Bill considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Question proposed, "That Clause 1 stand part of the Bill."

**THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY** (*Sir J. T. Hibbert*, Oldham): The object of this Bill is to continue the powers obtained by the late Chancellor of the Exchequer with reference to the withdrawal of light coins. It contains two clauses only, and is very pressing.

\***MR. JAMES LOWTHER**: Does it deal with five-shilling pieces?

**SIR J. T. HIBBERT**: No; only sovereigns and half-sovereigns.

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill reported, without Amendment; to be read the third time To-morrow, at Two of the clock.

#### POLICE ACTS AMENDMENT BILL. (No. 105.)

Bill, as amended, considered; Amendments made; Bill read the third time, and passed.

#### SEA FISHERIES REGULATION (SCOTLAND) BILL.

On Motion of *Sir George Trevelyan*, Bill for the better regulation of Scottish Sea Fisheries, ordered to be brought in by *Sir George Trevelyan*, the Lord Advocate, *Mr. Marjoribanks*, and *Mr. Solicitor General* for Scotland.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 244.]

## CHOLERA HOSPITALS (IRELAND) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. John Morley, Bill to enable sanitary authorities in Ireland to take possession of land for the erection of temporary Cholera Hospitals, ordered to be brought in by Mr. John Morley and Sir Walter Foster.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 245.]

## MERCHANDISE MARKS ACT (1887)

## AMENDMENT BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Fenwick, Bill to amend "The Merchandise Marks Act, 1887," ordered to be brought in by Mr. Fenwick, Mr. Abraham, and Mr. John Wilson (Durham).

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 246.]

## LICENSED HOUSES (SCOTLAND).

Return ordered, "for each Parish in Scotland, not being a Royal or Parliamentary Burgh, giving the following particulars respecting licensed houses, arranged in columns, and all of them to be added up; also a summary of the results for the years from Whit Sunday, 1883, to Whit Sunday, 1884, and from Whit-Sunday, 1891, to Whit-Sunday, 1892:—Population in 1891; number of hotels and public-houses; number of grocers' licences; number of licences to sell ale or beer only; the Return to be divided into two parts, the one containing those Parishes in which there are licensed houses, and the other those Parishes in which there are no licensed houses (in continuation of Parliamentary Paper, No. 426, of Session 1875.—(*Mr. Peter M'Lagan.*)

## CONTEMPT OF COURT (PERSONS DETAINED) (IRELAND).

Address for "Return of all Persons detained in Prisons in Ireland under committal by Judges for Contempt of Court, or who are otherwise in Prison without trial and are not awaiting trial; the name, address, and occupation of each Prisoner; by whom committed, and the cause of committal; date of committal and imprisonment; Medical Report on physical and mental condition of each Prisoner; whether committed for a specific term or indefinitely, and if for a specific term when it will expire."

"And, in similar form, the names of all Persons detained in Prison for Penalties or Debts due to the Crown in Revenue suits."—(*Mr. Matthew Kenny.*)

## IMMIGRATION INTO THE UNITED STATES.

Copy ordered, "of Communication addressed to Mr. John Burnett and Mr. David Schloss directing them to inquire into and report on matters connected with the Immigration of Foreigners into the United States."—(*Mr. Mundella.*)

Copy presented accordingly; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 96.]

## ADJOURNMENT.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That this House do now adjourn."

## A PERSONAL QUESTION.

SIR T. LEA (Londonderry, S.): Mr. Speaker, I wish to ask you if it is in Order for the hon. Member for Mid Cork (Dr. Tanner) to cross over the House, sit on the Bench below me, and indulge in language which, if it is not an insult, is offensive?

\*MR. T. W. RUSSELL: I beg to say, Sir, that I have been sitting in my own seat for the last 10 minutes, and have been subjected to the most insulting observations.

DR. TANNER: As a matter of fact, I have never addressed the hon. Member once since I crossed the House. I came over here to speak to an hon. Member behind me. As a matter of fact, the hon. Member is in absolute error. When hon. Members who ought to sit on the other side of the House sit on this side and vote against the Government, I say I have a right to sit here.

MR. T. W. RUSSELL: I can only say, Sir, that during the last 10 minutes I have been subjected to these insults.

DR. TANNER: What insults?

\*MR. SPEAKER: Of course, the hon. Member is perfectly entitled to cross the House if he thinks fit, and to sit where he pleases. No Member, of course, is entitled to use offensive language, and I hope the hon. Gentleman will not use any language which gives offence to any hon. Member.

DR. TANNER: Certainly, Sir. If I used any language offensive to the hon. Member I call upon him to say what was the language I used.

MR. SPEAKER: I think it would be better that the incident should now close.

Motion agreed to.

House adjourned at ten minutes past Twelve o'clock.

## HOUSE OF LORDS,

Friday, 3rd March 1893.

The Lord Clarina—Took the Oath.

## PROBATION OF FIRST OFFENDERS.

## QUESTION. OBSERVATIONS.

\*LORD STANLEY OF ALDERLEY asked the Lord President whether Her Majesty's Government would follow up the Home Office Circular of 25th April, 1892, by making the Probation of First Offenders Act, 1887, compulsory in cases of theft by offenders under 20 years of age; and if Her Majesty's Government would amend the Education Act of 1870 in accordance with the recommendation of the majority of the Royal Commission on Education contained in paragraph 60 of the Report dated 27th June, 1888. He said he was sorry he had been unable to comply with a request that he would separate the two questions, for they hung together, and could not be separated. By the efforts of the late Lords Fitzgerald and Milltown the extension of the First Offenders Act, 1887, to Ireland, which had been opposed in the House of Commons by Mr. Healy, was carried out by their Lordships. A Home Office Circular, signed by Sir Godfrey Lushington, and dated 25th April, 1892, was sent to all the Chairmen of Quarter Sessions, urging them to make more use of the Act. Sir Horatio Lloyd, Chairman of the Chester Quarter Sessions, stated there last June that he had received the Circular, and that he had put the Act in force in 15 cases; he spoke highly of it, and of the desirability of not sending boys to prison to be contaminated, but two stipendiary magistrates had told him that they had disregarded them. About the same time an undergraduate at Cambridge, who was 19 years of age and who had taken a good degree, carried off some books from the town and University libraries. He did not sell or pawn them, and when he was brought before the magistrate he pleaded guilty, and got a sentence of eight months. It was believed that he had gone off his head from over-pressure; and he himself and the sitting Member, and also his

opponent at the elections, had all made representations to the Home Secretary to induce him to give this young fellow the advantage of the First Offenders Act, but Mr. Matthews, with much inconsistency, was obdurate, and, in spite of the Circulars he had issued throughout the country, would do nothing. Last winter a boy of 14 stole some silk and was sentenced to two months' imprisonment at Macclesfield. Petitions numerously signed were sent from that town to Mr. Asquith to give him the benefit of the Act; but Mr. Asquith also was obdurate, and the boy finished his two months, and since that time had gone to a home. Meantime the newspapers said that further Circulars had been sent by the Home Secretary to the Magistrates at Macclesfield urging the use of the Act. Assuming that the Act was a good one—and all the Law Lords in the House had supported it—and that it was a necessary Act, since the Magistrates did not sufficiently use their discretion, it would appear that the discretion of the Home Office was not to be trusted, and it would therefore be better to make the Act compulsory for all thefts by first offenders under 20 years of age. But a stronger argument was that it would be a great injustice to condemn to prison boys who had not been taught any better. Many of the Board school children received no religious instruction whatever, and it was not fair to thus condemn young offenders who had not been taught to discriminate between right and wrong. This amendment of the First Offenders Act was, in short, the necessary corollary of the Education Act of 1870. Mr. Justice Stephens, in his history of the Criminal Law, had shown that the Criminal Law was an expansion of the second table of the Decalogue, and that the Catechism taught children to observe the Decalogue and the Criminal Law. There was a legislative precedent for such an amendment—every dog might have his first bite; every boy his first theft. If anyone said that was not a precedent for human beings he would reply that the Education Act of 1870 brought up the boys in Board schools worse than dogs, for dogs are born with true and honest instincts, whilst those of mankind were of the contrary nature. He might be asked why he had restricted

himself to the Eighth Commandment. He had done so on account of the great difference between theft and murder. He would call attention to the difference between the Sixth and Eighth Commandments. Everybody had an instinctive horror of murder; but it was only religion that inculcated the difference between *meum* and *tuum*. The natural instinct of man was not in favour of an observance of the Eighth Commandment, and man was always inclined to follow his predatory instincts. With primitive man and with all men not under the influence of religion might was right. With us a pirate was *hostis humani generis*, but with the ancient as well as the modern Greeks it was a title of honour, and etymologically it meant a man who endeavoured to get his livelihood. Again, klepht, a robber, was a title of distinction in modern Greece. That the natural instinct of man was towards theft was proved by both language and customs. The ancient Britons had no word for stealing; and the Eighth Commandment in Welsh had to be rendered by a Latin word, "Na ladratta;" there was, indeed, another word in Welsh, but it only meant "to bear" or "to carry," in the sense of Shakespeare's "convey." Mountaineers, again, had always plundered the plains, and a Welsh war-song had the words given by Mr. Peacock—

"The mountain sheep are sweeter,  
But the valley sheep are fatter;  
We therefore deemed it meetter  
To carry off the latter."

On the other hand, men made use of euphemisms to disguise theft; the Borderers called cattle stealing, cattle lifting, and Disendowment was the Parliamentary word for plundering a Church. In fact, wherever there was no religion, or where it was disregarded or obscured by ambition there was no difference between the instincts of a pre-historic man with a bigger stone-axe than his neighbours, or those of the Leader of a Parliamentary majority. With regard to the Education Act of 1870, the country had learned much by experience, and had lost many of the illusions with which Mr. Forster introduced it. The 3d. rate, which he in his optimism said was all it would cost the country, soon increased beyond four times that amount in many places, and we had not yet seen

the end of its cost. But worst of all had been the deception of those who trusted to Mr. Cowper Temple, and we had lost belief in what he and his friends called "common Christianity," which was expected to cause the Board schools to teach religion much as the voluntary schools did. It should rather be called Christianity reduced to its lowest terms; and "common" had now more the sense in which it was used by St. Peter in describing his vision at Joppa. The Bishop of St. Asaph proved, not long ago in the leading journal, the truth of his assertion that in Wales the teaching of central doctrine of Christianity was in precarious hands. How could it be otherwise when creeds, catechisms, the Decalogue, and the Bible were excluded from 37 Board schools in two counties of Wales? Even in the voluntary schools religious education was much restricted and hampered. Whether in the case of pre-historic man, of Board school children taught no religion, or of people who disregarded it or had forgotten it, the distinction between *meum* and *tuum* was soon lost.\* He would not refer to what went on in another place, but would ask what other explanation could be given of the Lord President's statement in that House a few nights ago that no Irish landlord had been robbed. The people who could, but would not, pay rent, and followed out the Plan of Campaign, had robbed their landlords. The Pope himself had condemned that as dishonest, and surely the Lord President was not going to set himself up as a better judge of morals than the Pope? He would ask the Lord President whether he would consider the necessity of re-establishing religious education in the schools throughout the country? Whether crime had increased or not was uncertain; it was denied by Sir Edmund Du Cane in this month's *Nineteenth Century*, but it was certain that the moral condition of the country had deteriorated, and fraud and dishonesty leading to suicide had increased. He would ask the Lord President to take into consideration the recommendations of the Royal Commission on Education, and to re-establish at least the Catechism, the necessity of which had been so well pointed out by Mr. Justice Stephen. The London School

Board had at last voted by 37 to 8 in favour of Christian moral instruction in the schools. From Mr. Gladstone they were accustomed to hear what they did not often hear from other people, and also it perhaps mattered little what might be the opinions of the noble Earl as Lord President, but in his other capacity of Secretary of State for India it certainly was of importance that he should not show indifference to religion when he had in his care the destiny and welfare of 40,000,000 Mussulmans and 200,000,000 Hindoos, who, though idolaters, were deeply religious subjects of Her Majesty.

LORD RÖÖKWOOD asked the noble Lord representing the Home Office to pause before assenting to the idea of making the probation of first offenders compulsory, and to consider the difficulties which might arise in pursuing such a course. He had a good deal to do with this Act in another place, and since then, as Chairman of Quarter Sessions, he had seen the Act put into force; and he believed one of the greatest advantages of the Act was that, when a young criminal was convicted, a householder was bound over to bring him up during 12 months if called upon. In his judgment that provision was the greatest incentive to a young man not to commit a second offence, and to lead an honest life. He therefore hoped the application of the Act would not be made, as proposed, compulsory, and therefore ineffective.

LORD VERNON: The noble Lord has asked two questions rolled into one, and has travelled in doing so over such an enormous extent of ground that it would take all the few Members of the Liberal Party present in your Lordships' House to fully answer him. I shall only deal with the first, because the second does not concern the Department for which I am instructed to respond. He asks that the Probation of First Offenders Act shall be made compulsory in cases of theft by offenders under 20 years of age. The heading of the Act as it now stands is, "An Act to permit the conditional release of First Offenders in certain cases." The provisions of the Probation of First Offenders Act, as well as similar provisions in Section 16 of the Summary Jurisdiction Act, 1879, are no doubt very useful when applied in appropriate cases, and a Home Office Circular issued in

April, 1892, recommended magistrates to take more frequent advantage of them. As the noble Lord has read the circular that was issued to all Chairmen of Quarter Sessions, I will not read it again; but in it noble Lords will observe that a very small percentage of persons dealt with under the Act have been called upon to appear and receive judgment, or were known to the police to have been subsequently convicted of a fresh offence. The Secretary of State, in these circumstances, felt justified in issuing the Circular urging on magistrates the advisability of making more general use of these enactments. But to make their application compulsory in all cases of persons under 20 convicted of larceny, without regard to the circumstances of the individual case, would be most mischievous. It would be an intimation that children and youths under 20 might safely go on committing theft until they had been at least once convicted. This would not only affect children of the criminal classes, but would put temptation in the way of young servants and *employés*. It would also be an inducement to older criminals to corrupt children and young persons and employ them in crime, as they could tell them that even if caught they would not be punished. The application of the powers under the Act are clearly a matter for judicial discretion. The question asked by the noble Lord may bear some fruit by accentuating the Home Office Circular of April, 1892, but I am sure that he would not wish to press forward anything that might increase criminal actions by younger members of our population.

THE LORD PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL AND SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA (The Earl of KIMBERLEY): My Lords, my noble Friend who asks the question will not think me guilty of discourtesy to him in asking my noble Friend behind me to answer that part of it relating to the Home Office. I know that my noble Friend is anxious that I should not be overburdened with work, and I will point out to him that having already two Departments to answer for it is scarcely reasonable to call upon me to reply for a third. I will, however, say a few words with regard to that part of the noble Lord's question which refers to the Home Office, because I hold a very strong opinion



upon the matter. I regret that more advantage is not taken of the Act, and I hope that magistrates will avail themselves more frequently of the power granted by the Act. I gathered from my noble Friend that we ought to put in the same class pre-historic man and Board school scholars. He also gave us a very interesting digest of the Ten Commandments, and he gave a certain character to the Welsh people which they might hardly be inclined to accept. I am not quite sure whether he finally acquitted them of a predilection for stealing, but as far as I could discover he came to the conclusion that stealing was not naturally a crime in the eyes of mankind, and he thereupon drew the somewhat curious conclusion that it was desirable first offenders should not be punished. I must say that I do not see the connection in logic between the two proposals. I am not going to revive the old controversy which raged so fiercely concerning the Cowper-Temple Clause and the kind of religious instruction which was given in Board schools, but unless I am wrongly informed, except in a minority of those schools, religious instruction of a certain kind is given. I am sure my noble Friend will recognise that, and also what has been done in the London Board schools, where the resolution he approves has just been come to. I do not think it would be at all desirable to re-open this very difficult question—and certainly not on this occasion—of the precise amount of religious instruction which should or can be given in those schools which are attended by children belonging to so many religious denominations. Every right-minded man I suppose would desire that his children should be brought up religiously and morally; but into the mode in which religious instruction should be given in Board schools I must respectfully decline to enter now. The noble Lord may, however, I think, console himself, for I have never heard that there is any connection between Board schools and crime, and when the noble Lord is able to show that a larger percentage of Board school scholars than of children in other schools or from the remaining portion of the population are addicted to crime, I have no doubt that his statement will be carefully examined into, and will, if necessary, form the subject of inquiry.

*The Earl of Kimberley*

## THE STATE OF CLARE.

### QUESTION. OBSERVATIONS.

\*THE MARQUESS OF LONDONDERRY asked Her Majesty's Government whether their attention had been called to the Charge of Mr. Justice O'Brien, who, addressing the Grand Jury of the County Clare, at Ennis, was reported to have stated that—

"The picture which the Constabulary Returns made presented to his mind a condition of lawlessness in the county far exceeding in amount that which came under his or the Grand Jury's experience in past times, and destined, he feared, unless checked by some vigorous hand, to increase. The facts were all known to the Grand Jury, who were aware there was no security for life in this County of Clare, and property was not more secure than life. What was more, a system of intimidation existed which was carried into all the relations of private and domestic life, and carried into all the relations that arose out of trade and every kind of occupation in the county ;"

and what steps Her Majesty's Government had taken to cope with so appalling a condition of affairs? He said: My Lords, having postponed the question of which I have given notice from yesterday until to-day, I may be asked whether it is absolutely necessary to put it now, as the same subject was under discussion last night in another place; but when I see present so many noble Lords closely connected with Irish affairs, especially my noble Friend the Lieutenant of County Clare, who will be able to supplement the facts and figures brought forward by my hon. Friends the Members for Tyrone and Armagh in another place, I think it is important that everything connected with Clare should be discussed in your Lordships' House in the present state of affairs in Ireland, and seeing the deplorable condition (which nobody can contradict) of that county itself. If the Debate had not taken place last night I should have thought that steps would be promised to be taken by Her Majesty's Government to bring about a totally different state of affairs, but I fear I may not receive the answer which would satisfy everybody to whom the interests and welfare of the poor and law-abiding population of Ireland is dear. Without any scruples as to the unhappy necessity, I should have thought it would have been the absolute duty of the Government to proclaim County Clare and to revive the

clause which enables a change of venue to take place. I had intended, had I had the opportunity last night of discussing this question, to have brought the condition of Clare fully before your Lordships, and the enormous and horrible class of crime there; but after the Debate last night I think that is unnecessary. I think also that it is not necessary I should detain your Lordships by giving details showing that County Clare is in a most unsatisfactory and disgraceful condition. The Chief Secretary for Ireland himself declared last night that the state of Clare was one of "demoralisation and lawlessness." Your Lordships may remember that on the occasion of the Address I ventured to dwell at considerable length on the unsatisfactory state of affairs at that time existing in Clare and Kerry. I laid special stress on the action of the Clare magistrates, and drew attention to a meeting of magistrates at which they unanimously called upon the Government to take such steps as might be needed, if necessary, by legislation, to put an end to a state of affairs which was a disgrace to any civilised society. Those remarks and resolutions of public bodies have been, as far as I can gather, entirely ignored by the Government up to the present moment, but I do not think any Administration, even the present Government, dare ignore the Charge of Mr. Justice O'Brien. *The Times* in its report omits some words from the Charge of the Judge which greatly strengthens the case—

"Unless some power intervenes of greater efficiency than mere judicial statement or interposition, I cannot but foresee that this evil will go on increasing "

—by that he meant lawlessness. I read in *The Times* to-day that at the conclusion of the Assizes Mr. Justice O'Brien, again addressing the Grand Jury, said—

"I consider it my duty now to draw the attention of those who are charged with the maintenance of the law and the preservation of life and property and all civil society to the result of the present Assizes, which is, that no kind of security any longer exists for property, for the person or life, so far as it depends on the law in the County of Clare."

The gist of Mr. Justice O'Brien's weighty remarks is that, in his opinion, such a state of intimidation existed in the County of Clare at the present time

that it is impossible to get juries to convict, because they believe that if they dared to convict those whom they believe to be guilty, and therefore ought to be convicted, their lives would be made a burden to them. What was evidently in the mind of his Lordship was that without a change of venue it is absolutely impossible to obtain convictions of law-breakers and criminals. No doubt it is possible in Ireland, as in England and Scotland, to change the venue under the ordinary law; but the clause which I myself when in Ireland found so useful enables the venue to be changed without the complicated processes which are necessary under the general system. I hope that the special clause which we found so necessary in Ireland was suspended in ignorance by the present Chief Secretary, who could not have been in Office a week before he got rid of it. I hope the right hon. Gentleman had no ulterior motive; but he could scarcely have taken such a step if he had consulted those who had special knowledge and experience of Ireland. I think he would have done well to have done so, for he should have known that his own experience of the condition of that country was absolutely worthless. If he had consulted those who had that knowledge and experience he would have found that it was nothing new for County Clare to be in this unsatisfactory condition, for when I undertook the responsibility of the Government of Ireland, the County of Clare was in precisely the same condition as now; lawlessness abounded in all directions. In addressing the Grand Jury in 1887, Mr. Justice O'Brien said—

"All these Returns which I have before me, and the information which has reached me from other quarters of an unquestionably authentic character, lead me to the conclusion that law, to a great extent, has ceased to exist in the county."

At that time, in the early spring of 1887, no power existed for grappling with that condition of lawless crime and outrage; but we were not apathetic, and we were not disposed to let that condition of things continue. Mr. Balfour appealed to Parliament, which granted him the powers necessary for grappling with the evil. The exercise of those powers was followed by a decrease of crime, for the Returns showed that there were 153 in 1887, 104 in 1888, when the Crimes Act

had begun to work, 63 in 1889, and 52 in 1890. Now I wish to ask the noble Earl opposite (Earl Spencer), who administered in Ireland a stringent Coercion Act with ability and severity, the reason why Mr. Morley relaxed the powers of secret inquiry and change of venue, which had been found so useful, a step which he could not have taken without the approval in the Cabinet of the noble Earl himself. I am beginning to learn that the noble Earl's usual method is to ignore the question and reprove me for using strong language; but he will admit that I have now abstained from using strong language, although if it were ever permissible it would certainly be on the present occasion. Language too strong could not be brought to bear upon those who watch with apathy, unconcern, and absolute indifference the miseries daily perpetrated on the humble but law-abiding population of Clare, and do not lift one finger to bring to justice the miscreants who wrought those miseries. Then I would ask the noble Earl to give some statistics of the number of arrests as compared with the number of offences; but I do not ask for statistics of convictions of those found guilty of outrages, simply because it is hopelessly impossible, as we find from Mr. Justice O'Brien's Charge, to obtain convictions in County Clare. It may be true that the condition of Clare is not worse now than it was under Mr. Jackson, Mr. Balfour, and Sir M. Hicks-Beach, but surely that is no reason for relaxing the powers necessary to bring offenders to justice. Neither is it any answer to say, as the Lord Chancellor has said, that Ireland, as a whole, is in a satisfactory condition, notwithstanding the condition of Clare, because the humblest inhabitant of Clare is entitled to protection equally with any inhabitant of the most prosperous county in Ireland, and I hold that the Government are as responsible for the protection of those inhabitants of Clare who are so frequently shot at, but fortunately, owing to the miscreants' inability to hit, are seldom actually murdered, as for that of the Lord Lieutenant and Chief Secretary in their respective Lodges in the Phoenix Park. I believe the noble Earl is as anxious as anyone that Clare should be in a comfortable position; but if the present Government are un-

*The Marquess of Londonderry*

able to bring about the change they desire what would be the state of Clare with a Parliament on College Green, led by the men who have advocated and gloried in intimidation and boycotting? Miserable as the people now are, they are living in paradise as compared with the hell upon earth which would then exist. Remember, my Lords, that if Home Rule is ever granted these are the people who will be the first to suffer at the hands of a Parliament in Dublin. What course does Her Majesty's Government propose to take? I maintain that it is their duty to revive the clauses they have suspended, and to proclaim the County of Clare, in spite of the threat of Mr. William Redmond that he will oppose them if they do so. If they are conscientious they will put that threat on one side, proclaim the county, and earn the gratitude of every law-abiding man who lives in it. In *The Times* of to-day I read that Mr. Justice Gibson, in opening the Limerick Assizes the previous day, said, addressing the Grand Jury, with regard to the general condition of the county, that—

"There was in the Constabulary Returns evidence of a very formidable state of affairs; there was an increase of specially-reported crimes as compared with last year, the number being 81 as against 54 last year; and, commenting on some of the cases, he said that to his mind they showed two things—one a certain amount of hard lawlessness in the community, and the other an utter and highly objectionable disregard on the part of those who were the victims of these outrages to come forward and give evidence."

I propose at an early day to draw attention to this Charge of Mr. Justice Gibson's, because, if my memory serves me right, the Judge of Assize at this time last year had a totally different account to give of the condition of that county. My Lords, I beg to ask the question which stands in my name.

LORD ACTON: My Lords, the noble Marquess warned us the other day that he meant to continue dredging his convenient newspapers, avowedly without taking any very great care to inquire into or verify their statements, and apparently with no great solicitude whether he thereby made the Government of Ireland, once committed to his hands, more difficult and dangerous to his successor. When I saw the paragraph to which he has given the sanction of an illustrious name, and which he has nailed to the

pillory for too many days, I thought he had missed an unusually good opportunity of avoiding a mis-statement. The words which he quotes as those of the learned Judge were spoken by him ; but they have been rather ingeniously dove-tailed from different parts of his speech, and still more ingeniously separated from their context. They are remarkable by their isolation, and remarkable by their companionship. The learned Judge remembered the days of old, and the lamented sway of the noble Marquess, and, as I learn from an authentic report, spoke as follows :—

“Traditions of lawlessness have existed in this county for a long period of time that cannot with any degree of accuracy or justice be attributed to recent causes, but still I must say”—

and then comes in the portion of that statement which has been given by the noble Marquess—later on comes another portion. Then he said—

“There are 117 cases reported to the Constabulary since the Summer Assizes last year. The number is slightly less than that reported for the corresponding period of last year,” he means the preceding year, “but so far as my information leads me to know, the total of crime is distributed nearly equally over the whole period of the year, and it will not be accurate to attribute it to any change that has recently been made affecting the administration of the law.”

Having said that, the learned Judge remembered the days of old and the lamented sway of the noble Marquess, and spoke of the past. He invites us, in the terms which have been referred to, to look back, to go into the figures, and to consider what happened in former times. My Lords, I have done so. I have carefully examined the detailed Returns. I did so yesterday, and the postponement of the question has enabled me to do so again to-day. I have not been able to discover evidence of increasing lawlessness here imputed. I will go into no numerous figures. The whole town is full of figures to-day, and I will give you as few as possible. Here is the latest Return of agrarian outrages, specially reported in Clare during the six months ending the last day of February, and compared with the last corresponding period in 1891–2, that is to say, it contains the first six months of the present Administration as compared with the corresponding six months under the former Government : Murder and firing at the person, two in the earlier period, three in

the later ; incendiary fires, six, which have fallen to three ; killing or maiming cattle, five, which have fallen to two ; threatening letters, 14, which have fallen to 10 ; firing into dwellings, two, which have fallen to one ; injury to property, four, which have fallen to one ; riot or demand for arms were none, but have been in this period two. The totals are 33 cases, which have gone down to 22. I am very far indeed, my Lords, from quoting these figures as satisfactory, for there is an increase in cases of attempted murder, and I know that the test of morality and security is not the number of murders committed, but of murders attempted, and of those unfortunately we have three. Nevertheless, by every rule of arithmetic, I can discern no actual increase in crime. I pass to the question of Constabulary. In March, 1892, there was an extra force in Clare of 144 men, and a reserve of 24. This was then reduced to 109 and 12. Whether this measure was a wise one, or whether it ought to be reversed, is a question now seriously engaging the attention of the Irish Government. But it is clearly a proof that neither the late Government nor the Grand Jury of the county thought the condition of things a year ago appalling, when it was certainly not better than now. My Lords, the specific evil in Clare is not the aggravation of crime, but the impunity of crime. The learned Judge has stated that, in his opinion, the remedy is change of venue. I listen with respect to the observations of the learned Judge, as I do to everything I do not understand, and I should be glad to think him right. But I cannot see how that can be. By change of venue you get a different Jury ; but how do you expect to get a better witness ? On this point, however, it is difficult to form an opinion at present. I should be glad to think that the thing was possible, but we cannot consider that it is in any way promising until we have been enabled to examine more closely the results obtained by the late Government in the cases when it resorted to that expedient.

THE EARL OF ARRAN asked what was the source from which the noble Lord had quoted Mr. Justice O'Brien's Charge ?

LORD ACTON : I quoted from what I think was the organ of Dublin Castle in the time of the noble Marquess.

THE EARL OF ARRAN: The noble Lord said he learned the facts from an authentic report.

LORD ACTON: I said it was authentic in this sense—that I have received information from some person who heard it that it was strictly accurate.

THE EARL OF ARRAN: What was the paper?

LORD ACTON: It was *The Irish Times*.

LORD INCHQUIN said it was with regret and shame that he felt compelled to address their Lordships again, as he had unfortunately had to do on more than one occasion during the last 20 years, on the condition of the County Clare. That condition was now so serious that even if the learned Judge had not thought fit to make the important remarks he had made at Clare Assizes, he should have felt it was his duty to call their Lordships' attention to the present condition of that county. On the 21st of January he, as Lord Lieutenant of the county, called a meeting of the Magistrates to consider this matter. It had been said that he ought to have called them together at an earlier period, and he would state the reason why he did not think it advisable to do so. There was no doubt that the condition of the county had been anything but satisfactory during the last 10 or 12 years, but he must ask their Lordships to go back for a moment to consider what was the whole origin of the existing state of things. It commenced, first of all, 12 years ago by the formation of the Land League. At that time he protested against allowing a body of that kind to go on without check or hindrance, and he could not get people to understand the mischief that was being wrought, but now they had a specimen of it before them. Before the formation of the Land League Clare was comparatively quiet; but during the last 10 years crime and outrage, previously infinitesimal, had varied from 200 to 300 serious cases. In 1887, speaking from memory, he made an earnest appeal to Her Majesty's Ministers—the Conservatives were then in power—upon the state of things that then existed, and that very night a most brutal and terrible murder of an emergency man was committed not far from where he lived. After that the Crimes Act was brought in, and, as far as he

and others were able to see, that Act was working its way gradually, and putting down crime. Upon the question of change of venue, he would like to answer what he heard Mr. Morley say last night in the House of Commons. Mr. Morley seemed to think that this change of venue was of very little importance, and he said that there were only two cases in which it had been put in force in the County Clare. But when the venue was changed to Sligo convictions were obtained, and those convictions had a considerable effect in the County Clare. He believed that convictions were also obtained in Cork. Therefore, he maintained that change of venue was of the very utmost importance. Another thing which Mr. Morley said was that the Magistrates, at a meeting over which he (Lord Inchiquin) presided, had made no suggestions as to what should be done. Now, he did not think it was within the province of the Magistrates to make suggestions as to what ought to be done in regard to the government of the country. Their business was to carry out the law, and to see that it was respected. But it so happened that in this case the Magistrates did make suggestions at his instance. Mr. Morley last night alluded to two resolutions which the Magistrates had passed; there were seven in all. The first expressed regret at the return of lawlessness. The Returns connected with crime last year were sent to him monthly, as Lord Lieutenant of the county, by the police, and apparently they were not classed in the same way as the Government quoted them. They simply gave what the crime was, and if anyone had been made amenable. Taking the whole of the Returns for last year, he divided them into two classes, serious and less serious crime, and he challenged the Government to say that the figures were not correct. He called such offences as malicious burning, firing into dwellings, and firing at the person serious crime. Mr. Morley said that during last year there was no murder in the County Clare. But, at all events, there had been three or four attempts at murder. As to what were considered less serious crimes, such as threatening letters, he must say that they were not of such slight importance as some people imagined. There were many cases in which it had

come under his observation that threatening letters had been followed within a very short time by the threatened persons being fired at and sometimes killed. No one who received threatening letters could feel in a very comfortable position. He might have to be out by night and at times when he might be exposed to great danger, and if a person received letters of that kind what security had he that the threats would not be carried out? In the month of January, 1892, there were nine serious crimes committed in Clare and six less serious; in February there were five serious and nine less serious; in March, six serious crimes; in April five; in May seven; in June eight; or a total of 40 serious crimes in the first half of last year, and 62 less serious. During the last half of the year there were 43 serious and 44 less serious, so that the serious crimes of the last half exceeded the total of the first half of the year by three. But what were those serious crimes? On October 17 Michael Hogan's house was fired into, and *à propos* of that he would mention that last night the Chief Secretary talked very lightly of houses being fired into. On that occasion no one was killed, but in very many cases there were murderous results. Only three months ago he passed two houses in the West of Clare which had been fired into at night a few years ago with fatal results. In one case Mr. Moloney, who was sitting by his fireside, was shot dead. In the second case his attention was drawn to a house where the broken glass had been replaced by brown paper, and a girl showed him the bed she was sleeping on when her sister was shot dead by her side. Those cases had happened only within the last year or two. A day or two after Michael Hogan's house was fired into his cattle were mutilated, and what could be more horrible than the mutilation of dumb animals? On December 5, a very few days after the other outrages, Mr. Thomas Crowe, a magistrate of the county and a deputy-lieutenant, was fired at, and his coachman, who was sitting behind him, was shot in the back of the head. In another case two or three ruffians, with blackened faces, entered the house of the Misses Brown in the evening and told them if they did not dismiss a certain man in their employment they would be shot, and they fired at those helpless girls and then left. Were not

such things as bad as murder? And close to that spot, Mr. Perry, the agent, was murdered last year. On January 3 bailiffs went to assist Captain O'Callaghan at Bodyke in seizing cattle; but the place was surrounded by men who fired from the hills down upon the bailiffs. All these crimes and another of the same kind were committed between October 17 and January 17, and they were all of a serious character. Now, to deal with such a state of things it was absolutely necessary, in the first place, that the Government should renew the Crimes Act. He had had a much longer experience of County Clare—where he had resided almost entirely for the last 20 years—than Mr. Morley, and his experience was quite contrary to that of Mr. Morley's. Mr. Morley had said on the previous evening that secret societies did not exist in Clare. He was as convinced that they did exist as he was convinced that he was standing in their Lordships' House. On every occasion during the last few years when it was thought advisable by the Nationalists to increase outrages, crimes had followed at once. The proportion of free police to the population in Clare was actually less than in Kildare—one of the most peaceful counties in Ireland. It was true that the Grand Jury last year asked for a decrease of the police force; but that was only on the ground of expense. The present Government had at their backs a power which the late Government never possessed—the power of the priests; but even with that aid they had not been able to suppress outrages and secret societies. If these things were done now, what would happen when the police force was disbanded under the Home Rule Bill? There would then be no chance whatever of rents being collected or of contracts being fulfilled. There was no earthly reason for the proposal to disband the existing police force, except that the Nationalists who supported the Government demanded that it should be done. With regard to the withdrawal of the troops by the late Government, objections were entertained by the Military Authorities to breaking up regiments into small detachments; but, if necessary, Government should again send troops into the county, even if the discipline of the regiments should be a little put out by it. Compensation, or "blood-money" as it

was called, should also be paid in cases of murderous outrage, as recommended by the Magistrates. It was now the interest of Nationalists and priests alike to keep the country quiet at present while Home Rule was being debated in Parliament, otherwise the attention of the country would be drawn to the probable results if the Government policy was carried out, but they were nevertheless unable to stop these crimes and outrages. He had not intended to treat this matter in a political light, but he would ask their Lordships to consider what would happen then with the police disbanded, as proposed by the Home Rule Bill? He apologised for having detained their Lordships, but he was anxious to answer the statements so recently made by the Chief Secretary.

\*EARL COWPER said that for obvious reasons noble Lords from Ireland should not be left to discuss this subject alone, but they ought to know that they had the sympathy of those whose personal interests were not involved. The matter was very serious. A Judge, with all the responsibility of his station, and accustomed to weigh his words, described the state of Clare in the gravest language, alleging that there was no security for life in the county; that a system of intimidation was carried into all the relations of private life; and that property was little more secure than life itself. No statistics could explain that away. The attempt had been made to show that things had been as bad under the late Government. That *tu quoque* argument might be good as against the late Government; but it afforded no comfort to those connected with Ireland, or to those who had nothing to do with the late Government. It was no reason for the present Government being unable or unwilling to deal with the existing state of things. Besides, the mere fact that the present state of lawlessness had now gone on for another year made it much worse. During the late Government there were a certain number of people who encouraged crime in order to make government impossible; but now, although their influence was in an opposite direction, yet crime was practically at the same point, showing that the spirit of the country was worse than before. Figures could not be entirely relied on as the only test of the disturbed state of the country. There was a general feeling in the

atmosphere, a state of terror amongst the inhabitants, which could only be judged of by those who went amongst the people. A Judge was in communication with all sorts of men, and was in a position to gauge the general feeling. The Constabulary, also, were able to tell when there was danger abroad; and he believed that the statement of Mr. Justice O'Brien was founded very much on the Returns of the police. It would be interesting to see what those Returns were. They had been asked for in the other House, but had been refused. Probably, if they had been of a reassuring character, they would have been produced. No answer had been given to the case brought forward in both Houses, and no assurances had been given that the present state of things would, in some way or another, be put an end to. The chief thing complained of by Mr. Justice O'Brien was not so much the amount of crime as the amount of intimidation and the difficulty of obtaining convictions. He distinctly said there were seven cases, and those seven cases were not a fair representation of the amount of crime, in which he pointed out the impossibility of obtaining a conviction, in spite of every attempt having been made to stir up the juries to a sense of their duties, and to induce them to do what they ought to have done. But they were frightened, and the only remedy was a change of venue. The difference between the present time and a year ago in the feelings of the unfortunate inhabitants of Clare was that then they knew that by a stroke of the pen the Government could reintroduce any clause of the Crimes Act, if they found it necessary, and could in a very short time put a stop to what was going on. No doubt the Government could do this now, but it would require a distinct going back from what they had said during the last six years, and he doubted if they would so far humiliate themselves. That showed the danger of using, even in Opposition, unbridled language, because they might have known that the time might come when they would be responsible, and when they would be so hampered by the rash statements they had made that they would find their hands tied. The present Government found their hands tied now because prominent Members of it

had gone about the country denouncing what they called coercion, which consisted of measures that they in their own hearts must have known to have been necessary. He hoped that they would have sufficient public spirit, if the present state of things continued in Clare, even at the expense of personal humiliation to use the great and sufficient powers already in their hands.

THE EARL OF DUNRAVEN said, he was surprised to see noble Lords opposite taking up the line that no case had been made out showing an increase of crime in Clare since the present Government came into power, and that being the case they seemed unable to understand what there was to complain of. He assured them that in bringing forward the question of the lawless condition of the County of Clare noble Lords on his side of the House had not been actuated by any political or Party motives whatever. They did not desire to make out that crime had particularly increased since the present Government came into Office. They wanted to know what steps the Government were going to take to put down the present state of things. If his noble Friends had been actuated by Party motives they would surely rather rejoice than otherwise at the state of things in Clare, because it presented a sort of object-lesson of what would take place in Ireland if the Bill for the repeal of the Union should become law. It would be of immense value from a Party and partisan point of view. He did not rely much upon the statistics as to crime in Ireland, nor did he know exactly what constituted agrarian crime and what differentiated it from crime not agrarian, but he would be curious to know whether the mere fact that the Crimes Act had been withdrawn from the County of Clare would not in itself diminish the amount of crime as reported by the police. His impression was that simple intimidation, unaccompanied by violence, was not, except in a few cases, a crime, either at Common Law or by Statute, but it was a crime under the Coercion Act, and therefore if that Act were withdrawn it was perfectly obvious that a large proportion of crimes would disappear, because those offences would not then be crimes which should be reported by the police. Noble Lords opposite seemed to look upon the present state of

crime in Clare as a matter of very little importance. The Chief Secretary for Ireland had put shooting into houses in the same category as football or hockey, or anything of that kind. It might be very amusing to the people who fired, but it was not so amusing to the people fired at. The general attitude of the Government towards the condition of Clare was not one to inspire the country with very much confidence in them. When the late Government came into Office they were in a very difficult position, for they had to re-introduce civilisation into a completely demoralised country in the face of the avowed determination of the leaders of the Nationalist Party to make it impossible to govern Ireland, and Members of the present Government and their Party assisted the Nationalist leaders with great ability by their speeches and by their general attitude. Since the present Government had been in power their allies or leaders—he did not know which to call them—the Nationalists, had done their utmost to keep the country quiet. But the Nationalist Party were powerless to allay the evil spirits which they had themselves raised, and the men who would form the first Executive Government in Ireland would be equally powerless. It was lamentable to hear from a Judge's Charge to a Grand Jury recently that the terrible state of things in Clare was also rapidly spreading into the neighbouring County of Limerick. The condition of that county had so improved between 1887 and 1892 that it might fairly claim to be, in respect of crime, the model county of the South of Ireland. The noble Lord opposite seemed to think that change of venue would have little effect because you could not change the witnesses, but the learned Judge strongly pressed home his opinion that criminal proceedings should be taken entirely out of Clare on account of the manner in which juries were intimidated. He would ask whether Her Majesty's Government intended to take any steps to carry out that opinion; and, if not, what steps they intended to take to restore Clare to something like a state of law and order?

THE FIRST LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY (Earl SPENCER): My Lords, I think it is quite necessary I should say a few words in reply to the



speeches which have been made on this subject. I shall not be led, as I might be tempted, into illustrating our future policy for Ireland by incidents which have taken place in this Debate. I shall wait until the proper opportunity for discussing that question comes before your Lordships, and then I shall not in any way shrink from defending the principles which Her Majesty's Government have put forward. Anybody listening to the Debate which has taken place in this House to-night would suppose that Her Majesty's Government were going to say that they consider the state of Clare satisfactory. The Government, as your Lordships know, have no such opinion. They consider the condition of Clare most unsatisfactory. They consider it, I imagine, as unsatisfactory as do noble Lords opposite, and they desire to rectify the existing state of things and to restore law and order to all the subjects of Her Majesty in that county. The real question is one of administration—what is the best method to adopt in order to remedy the evils which are complained of? In the course of the remarks that I shall make, I shall try to show that Her Majesty's Government have not neglected anything which they could properly do, nor any measures which might be expected to yield satisfactory results. But before I go into that I should like to refer to remarks and appeals of the noble Marquess with whom I am sorry to be so constantly in difference of opinion in this House. He imputed to me that I am, so to speak, rather apt in answering him "having a bad case, to abuse his clients' attorney," and he said that when he puts questions to me I accuse him of using strong language. I am afraid the noble Marquess does not differ from some of his compatriots in that respect; he does frequently use it, and even to-night again I might quote his words. I will not do so. But what would your Lordships think if I passed over those remarks in silence and allowed Her Majesty's Government to be accused of all sorts of iniquities which he is constantly imputing to us? I have never allowed, and never shall allow, the noble Marquess to impute all sorts of iniquities to us without making some reply to them. In the first place, however, I wish to appeal to the noble Marquess, or to any noble Lord who is acquainted with proceedings in Parlia-

ment, whether it is possible to meet off-hand and without hesitation statistics which a speaker may bring forward, unless the Government know beforehand what is going to be done? I am sorry that we could not answer the statistics brought forward by the noble Marquess in the Debate on the Address. I could only bring the facts which I knew and thought sufficient to support the argument which I wished to lay before your Lordships. But the noble Marquess made a very solemn appeal to me, which I will answer at once. He asked me, as one who has had considerable experience in Ireland, whether my right hon. Friend the Chief Secretary referred to me before the proclamations were repealed. The noble Marquess also said that the Chief Secretary had not been in Ireland a week before this action was taken. I have not had an opportunity of refreshing my memory, but I cannot think that my right hon. Friend did this within a week. He took some time to inquire into the facts, and when my right hon. Friend had been in Ireland some considerable time he did write to me, saying—

"I have looked into the facts; my opinion is that with perfect safety we can repeal this and other proclamations,"

and he asked my opinion. I said, in these circumstances, that I agreed he should carry out the policy he intended. I cannot recollect at this moment, without looking at the correspondence, whether my right hon. Friend referred to the County of Clare, but he told me, having inquired into the whole position, he had come to the conclusion that as a matter of policy it was desirable to repeal these proclamations, and on that I gave him my opinion. The whole of the Government were responsible for the action of the Chief Secretary; but perhaps I am more responsible on account of my right hon. Friend having appealed to me. I accept the whole responsibility of the advice or answer which I gave. Looking at this Debate to-night and in another place, and to the facts that have occurred, I have not altered my opinion one whit. I will tell your Lordships why. The late Government had these powers at their command for six years. We admit that the state of Clare has been exceedingly bad for a long time, but notwithstanding their having those powers the late Government were not

ble to cope with the crime in any way. That is a point which ought to be considered, and I think we are justified in not continuing measures which were perfectly ineffectual to meet the difficulties which existed in this county. The noble Marquess referred to the clauses in the Act designed to facilitate the change of venue. I quite admit clauses in the Act gave greater facilities for the change of venue. What is the position now? The Assizes have just been held in Clare. As far as I know, there were two cases which went to the Assizes at Cork, one, the case of the emergency man, for which there was a conviction. It was found, according to the Judge and his Charge, that it was exceedingly difficult from the state of Clare to obtain a conviction; it is perfectly open to the Government at this moment, under the ordinary law, to obtain a change of venue in any case they may bring from the County Clare.

**\*THE MARQUESS OF LONDON-DERRY:** It is a most complicated process.

**EARL SPENCER:** I am aware it is not so easy as the other process, but it is a process well known, and can be adopted if wanted. They have not, therefore, cut themselves off from this important provision and from the possibility of asking for a change of venue. Since the Government have been in Office there has been no case of proceeding under it. I had considerable experience with regard to secret inquiries when I was in Ireland. I admit that on one memorable occasion a secret inquiry was most effective; but I had during the three years that I was in Ireland considerable experience in the rural districts of applying this mode of investigation, and I hold a strong opinion that, except the one memorable case in Dublin, there was not one single case where the secret inquiry brought any prisoners to justice. The late Government have had the power of secret inquiry in Ireland during six years. They have put it in force four times in Clare without its leading to a single conviction or without any beneficial results. I maintain, therefore, that this question of secret inquiry was not one of the slightest importance for meeting the difficulties in Clare, and if the Chief Secretary had maintained this system of inquiry we should not be nearer to getting

prisoners convicted of crimes of which they are justly accused than the late Government were. Several noble Lords have said that the Chief Secretary spoke lightly of firing into houses. I cannot conceive that possible. I have had many conversations with him on the subject, and he has always expressed his dismay and abhorrence at this terrible mode of intimidation, which, though they may not intend it to end in murder, may do so at any moment. I, therefore, on his part entirely repudiate the notion that my right hon. Friend treats lightly any of these crimes. Another offence referred to is that of threatening letters. It is the custom to record the number of threatening letters when considering the state of crime in Ireland. It is probably right to do so, though no doubt many of those letters are due to foolish persons who do not mean really any harm; but I have always held that the increase of threatening letters is a mischievous sign, and a sign of the state of the country which is not at all satisfactory. I do not think, therefore, that the increase in the number of threatening letters is a thing to be treated lightly at all. With regard to the withdrawal of troops and police, I may say that the late Government are alone responsible. I am aware that the Military Authorities always object to breaking up regiments into small divisions, but it is, of course, the duty of the Government to do what is necessary, when the peace of a district is threatened, to give protection and moral confidence to the people, and, if necessary for that purpose, the objections of the Military Authorities ought to be at once overruled. I have frequently done this myself, and any Government ought to do so if, in their opinion, the state of the country requires the military to support the police. As to the free police force, I wish to point out that this depends on the quota, and varies according to the condition of each county. That is given triennially. I have had a great deal to do with these matters, and I have altered the proportion enormously. I was one of the first who made a radical change in this respect, and to give one county a larger force of free police as compared with other counties under different conditions.

**LORD INCHQUIN:** May I ask, is it necessary to wait until 1894?

**EARL SPENCER :** As far as my experience goes, it is absolutely necessary to wait the proper triennial period for making a change in the free quota of police. Would the Government of the day have removed 47 police if they had thought that by remaining they would have done any good? They are responsible for it. If it had been considered necessary last year to make some reduction in this paltry charge for 47 men they might have done so; but instead of doing so they withdrew the 47 men, and therefore they did more than Mr. Morley has done, because they not only diminished the number of soldiers in the county, but also the police. This question is being considered very carefully by my right hon. Friend with a view to reconstituting the districts, and he is sending Inspectors in order to see what can be done to bring guilty persons to justice. I shall not follow all that has been said in this Debate, or the different proposals which the Grand Jury of Clare have made to the Government; all I wish to say is that the late Government, with exactly the same state of things and with all the powers at their disposal—much stronger than those at the disposal of my right hon. Friend—failed to cope with the disorder in this county. I admit that the condition of Clare is far from satisfactory, and I do not know that there is anything more to say beyond this—that it will receive the careful attention of Her Majesty's Government. I have not read the Charge of the learned Judge, but I am informed that last March—in 1892—there was another condemnatory Charge from Lord Justice Fitzgibbon on the state of Clare. But we on the other side did not take that matter up. We did not hold you responsible; and I maintain that this matter of the Charge of Mr. Justice O'Brien has been taken up now on account of political motives.

**THE MARQUESS OF LONDON-DERRY :** No.

**EARL SPENCER :** Then all I ask is, why last year, when exactly the same Charge to a Grand Jury was made by a very eminent Judge indeed, was no notice taken? And why, instead of taking fresh measures in consequence, 47 police were removed from the county in that year, and the troops as well?

**THE MARQUESS OF LONDON-DERRY :** I have not had the opportunity of read-

ing Lord Justice Fitzgibbon's address; but I doubt whether he called upon the Government to put down the disturbances in the county, as Mr. Justice O'Brien has done.

**EARL SPENCER :** The Government are bound to take anything of that kind into account, and they will do their utmost to restore order. Nothing that they have done, I maintain, will prevent them from doing it effectively if it is to be done at all. They will take every measure to restore order. The same state of things existed under the late Government, and I regret extremely that it exists now. I feel that it is necessary we should endeavour to put an end to it, and all I can say is that the Irish Government are endeavouring to do so. It would be wrong in me to forestall any act which may bring about that happy result.

**THE DUKE OF DEVONSHIRE :** I am not surprised that the noble Earl who has just spoken has thought it desirable to leave this matter in the position in which it was left by the noble Earl who spoke before him from the Treasury Bench. The answer which the noble Lord who preceded the noble Earl on the Treasury Bench gave was exactly that which was anticipated by the noble Marquess opposite. He was perfectly satisfied to prove that the state of affairs in Clare was no worse than it had been in the last few years. The noble Lord adduced a singular argument when he stated that he was totally unable to understand the meaning of Mr. Justice O'Brien when he recommended or suggested the desirability of obtaining a change of venue. I am glad to hear the noble Earl who has just spoken does not think the fact that Clare has been continually in a very unsatisfactory state is an excuse for absolute acquiescence in that condition on the part of Her Majesty's Government. I think we have obtained from the noble Earl more satisfactory assurances than those previously given either in this or in the other House of Parliament. I understand him to undertake on behalf of the Government the question of the change of venue as applicable to the case of Clare shall, at all events, be considered, and I should be inclined to hope, if the Government should find difficulties under the ordinary law, they

will not be above considering the desirability of extending the Proclamations of the Crimes Act to that county. What we want to know a little more about than we have yet is, What are the reasons which induced Her Majesty's Government to think that the whole of Ireland, including the County Clare, was last autumn in such a state as to justify the withdrawal of the Proclamations? The noble Earl says he does not recollect whether the case of Clare was specially considered or not. That is a somewhat remarkable statement, because I believe the County Clare was the only part of Ireland that was under Proclamation at the time when the Proclamation was withdrawn, and it is somewhat remarkable that the noble Earl should not recollect whether it was a case of absolutely withdrawing the Proclamation from Clare when the case came under his consideration or not. If he could have said that these Proclamations had been withdrawn after the careful consideration of the whole of Ireland—if he could have assured us that these Proclamations had been withdrawn because Her Majesty's Government had come to the conclusion that the ordinary law was sufficient in every part of Ireland to enforce good government and order, it would have been very satisfactory. On the contrary, it appears to me that the Government were more actuated by what is called "general considerations of policy" than the state of any particular part of Ireland. It is admitted that the County of Clare is, and has been for a very long time, in a most unsatisfactory condition. Well, then, surely one would have thought that it would have come under the consideration of the noble Earl whether any signs of improvement had appeared in that part of the country which would justify the Government in relaxing any precautions for the security of life and property. It is, however, satisfactory that my noble Friend has completely thrown over the contentions of his noble Colleague who preceded him. He said that he could not understand the remarks of the Judge when he suggested that the administration of justice should be removed as far as possible from the county itself. My noble Friend, on the other hand, says that he can quite understand that the change of venue might secure better

juries, but he could not see how they could secure better evidence. The remarks of the Judge pointed solely to the failure on the part of the juries. The evidence brought forward was ample, and the failure of justice was due to the system of intimidation which makes it absolutely impossible for any jury to do its duty. It is at least satisfactory to know that the gravity of this state of affairs is under the serious consideration of the Government, and that my noble Friend has undertaken on their behalf not to neglect to take all the precautions which may be found to be required in order to remove the administration of justice to some other part of the country where there is some possibility of finding a jury that will do their duty.

THE LORD PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL AND SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA (The Earl of KIMBERLEY): I do not think the noble Duke can have read the Charge of the Judge carefully, or he would not have made the remarks which we have heard with regard to witnesses, because I find that the Judge said that intimidation "had reached the jury-box and it had reached the witness-box." And although I quite agree that the fact that witnesses may have been intimidated does not prove that juries had not been intimidated, I think that quite answers the noble Duke's remarks, which do not betray, it seems to me, a complete understanding of the case. We are taunted with having referred to the state of crime under the *régime* of the late Government, and it seems to be thought that, because there was then a state of crime as bad as that which exists now in Clare, we were of opinion that we were justified in neglecting the measures we might think necessary for its repression. That is by no means the argument we use. We say that the state of things in Clare, under the exceptional measures of the late Government, was quite as bad as the state of things which has prevailed since, and the conclusion we came to, on a review of the whole case, was that the measures of the late Government were offensive to the general body of people of Ireland, and had failed in their object. What possible reason can we have for believing that any good can come from recurring to a system which we found had already

signally failed? The County of Clare remained then just as much infested by crime, and presented just as much difficulty in bringing criminals to justice, with all the stringent measures applied by the late Government, as it has done since they were withdrawn. I am simply asking your Lordships to consider what the results of the Coercion Act were. I think they were failures; and, if so, what ground was there for continuing them? Therefore, the Proclamation was withdrawn by the Chief Secretary, and I think wisely and rightly. I do not know the precise amount of consideration given to the matter by the Chief Secretary, but I cannot conceive that any one in his position could by any possibility omit to consider the condition of the County of Clare. The questions which present themselves to us are—Was it worth while to retain those measures? And is it necessary now to resort to them? The expediency of secret inquiry is practically given up; I think no one except the Lord Lieutenant of the county referred to it as being useful, and it has been proved to have failed. The only point which remains is that of change of venue, and, as I have said before, the change of venue in the hands of the late Government did not enable them to bring about an improvement in the state of the county. At the same time it will be right, if this state of things continues, to apply the power which exists under the present law and see whether by change of venue convictions can be obtained. It is exceedingly painful to admit, but all who have had practical experience know, that it has been found very difficult and often impossible to repress crime at certain times and in certain parts of Ireland. I should be more hopeful with regard to Clare if its lamentable condition had not lasted so long. But it is well known that there are from time to time outbreaks, which seem inexplicable, in particular counties. We had terrible outbreaks in Westmeath, Mayo, Meath, and Louth. But in these counties that state of things has passed away, and no one speaking without bias would be able to put his finger on the precise causes of change. It may have been owing to measures then had resort to, but I have seen the same measures applied in other places without success; or it may be, as has been suggested, that the County of

*The Earl of Kimberley*

Clare suffers from that greatest of all curses, the influence of secret societies. It may be so, but I should like more knowledge; and that of the noble Lord opposite can hardly be so great as that of Mr. Morley, derived, not from personal observation, but from the Reports of the Constabulary, which, at a time when they were hardly tried, I found to be singularly correct. If they say that the crime now existing in Clare is not instigated by secret societies I should be disposed to think they were right, and I should be more hopeful that the crimes may be repressed; but that does not bring us to the means of uprooting them. It has always been extremely difficult to deal with these crimes prevailing in Ireland. I deny that the present Government are averse to using such measures as they believe to be really necessary for dealing with crime, and I cannot do more than say I entirely concur with every word that has fallen from my noble Friend behind me (Earl Spencer) who spoke on the subject.

EARL CADOGAN: My Lords, I am bound to say I am rather in the position of the noble Lord who answers for Irish business in this House, who said he respected anything which he did not understand. I have the greatest respect for noble Lords who are members of the Government; but it is impossible for me and most of us to understand what is the exact course the Government propose to take with reference to the unfortunate and appalling condition of affairs in Clare. We have all along said we are aware that noble Lords themselves have no sympathy with crime; we none of us intend to impute that they are in any way careless as to any measures that ought to be undertaken to mitigate and deal with crime. Unfortunately, they are not complete masters of the situation at the present moment. They owe their existence as a Government to the sympathy and support of those who are, unfortunately, and have been proved to be, in sympathy with those who commit crime; and the noble Earl opposite who has just spoken, in the Debate on the Address at the beginning of the Session, threw a good deal of light upon the operations of Her Majesty's Government with reference to Ireland. He said—

“We have all along explained that we were opposed to the system of coercion,”

as he was pleased to term it—

“which was pursued by the late Government; and if we shape our course now in any particular manner is it not a sufficient explanation that we are anxious to show, not only that we are opposed to coercion, but that our opposition is not confined to speech!”

From that pregnant sentence it has occurred to me that all the separate causes of action which may be adopted by the Government are to be explained by this—that noble Lords opposite see a necessity to prove that they are opposed to coercion, so as to satisfy those who all along opposed the late Government in their efforts to preserve law and order in Ireland. The question raised by the noble Marquess is not a question of statistics; it is not whether the state of Clare is worse now than it was during the existence of the late Government. It cannot be denied that, whatever may be said of the state of Clare, the state of the law is different from what it was under the late Government. The present Government, for reasons which they have never yet explained, have thought it right to dispense with the only weapons by which they could expect efficiently to deal with the existing state of things. For what reasons have the Government denuded themselves of these powers? The noble Earl told us that these two weapons—the secret inquiry and change of venue—had not been found to operate largely on the diminution and extinction of crime. How does he know that if they had not existed in the time of the late Government the condition of Clare would not then have been worse than it is now?

EARL SPENCER: How can anyone know?

EARL CADOGAN: You yourself admitted it in reference to the suspension of the Crimes Act when you first came into Office. What argument can the noble Earl found upon that statement? Seeing that Clare has always been worse than any other part of Ireland, why do you believe you will strengthen your hands in dealing with crime by giving up two weapons which you found ready to your hands? No Member of the Government in either House has given any satisfactory explanation of the reasons for that course of action. We cannot conceal from ourselves the real reason why noble Lords opposite have with-

drawn these provisions is because they are bound from time to time to act at the bidding of their political supporters, and because unfortunately they do not realise thoroughly the danger of so acting upon the advice of those who now are their masters. With reference to the second question, what action the Government are about to take, with Clare in a condition about which there appears to be no doubt, I am entirely in the dark. I have not even the mitigated satisfaction felt by the noble Duke who gathered that the Government was prepared to take some steps. But, if so, what are those steps? I understand the Chief Secretary stated last night that he was about to increase the number of the police force in the County Clare. But I understood the noble Lord who answered for the Government to say that even that was problematical and that the Government was still considering the course they should pursue.

LORD ACTON: That they were considering it; the word “problematical” is introduced by the noble Earl.

EARL CADOGAN: Then we are to understand that while the Government acknowledge the condition of Clare is one of danger, one which reflects discredit on the condition of this country or on any civilised country, they yet part with the weapons ready to their hands, when the power of applying these two clauses of the Crimes Act, whatever they may say, must be productive of the greatest possible good in the prevention, if not in the detection, of crime. Even now they maintain their passive attitude, and give no further answer than that the matter is under consideration. The First Lord of the Admiralty, at the conclusion of his speech, was good enough to say that this Motion was brought forward on political grounds. If he meant by “political” grounds that my noble Friends behind me are actuated in this matter by feelings of Party politics, then I repudiate such a charge with all the warmth of which I am capable. If, on the other hand, this question is to be considered political in the ordinary sense of the word, I have no objection to the taunt of the noble Earl. There can be no questions of greater or higher importance in political life than those which affect the social welfare of any portion of Her Majesty’s dominions, Ireland or else-

where; and I believe noble Lords from Ireland will be doing less than their duty if they do not call the attention of this House and the country to the conduct of the affairs of Ireland by Her Majesty's Government, and if they do not continue to bring forward from time to time matters which they conceive to be of the greatest importance, and upon which they wish, if possible, to modify the policy of the Government; and I can only trust that by such continued action they will succeed in bringing the Government to a sense of the importance of preserving law and order in Ireland, and of so guiding their policy as to lead to a considerable improvement in the condition of that unhappy country.

THE LORD CHANCELLOR (Lord HERSHELL): My Lords, the noble Earl, having repudiated all thought of Party spirit or motive in this Debate, concludes by expressing the hope that we shall have many discussions similar to this in your Lordships' House in order that the Government may be brought to a sense of the importance of preserving law and order in Ireland. I will not express my opinion as to the character or aim of an observation of that description, but I will leave it to the judgment of the unprejudiced public outside this House, who, I think, will see in it an insinuation not altogether justifiable that Her Majesty's Government at the present time are indifferent to the preservation of law and order in Ireland. To speak of a Motion and such speeches as we have heard in this House as devoid of all Party significance, and then to conclude with language of that description, appears to me to be a proceeding which will be perfectly well understood, if not in this House, at least outside. Her Majesty's Government are as much alive as the noble Earl to the importance of putting an end to a state of crime existing in any part of the country. They are as conscious as they will be, even if the question is discussed a hundred times in this House, that that is an imperative duty resting upon the Government in any country. What is the foundation for the suggestion made by the noble Earl that the Government are indifferent but this—that Her Majesty's Government do not estimate at the same value as the noble Earl some of the methods by which it has been thought

crime may be repressed and this country brought into a more satisfactory condition. The noble Earl says that the Government have thrown away two weapons that were in their hands; but the noble Earl has not brought forward a tittle of evidence to show that either of those weapons would have been effective to strike a blow that would have improved the condition of things in Clare. And then he says the Government are responsible for that condition of things because they have thrown away two weapons which did not prove effective in the hands of those who used them in the Government of Ireland. What reason is there, then, for saying that the Government are blameable for throwing them away? That is the only charge that can be brought against the Government in this respect. As regards one of them, I deny that it can with any reason be spoken of as having been thrown away. The power to obtain a change of venue exists in point of law now as it did under the system of proclamation. The machinery is different machinery—that is all. Yes, it only depends upon an application to the Court, and to say you cannot through the Courts obtain change of venue when you wish to obtain it is an imputation cast upon the Courts of Ireland without necessity or justification. What proof is there that in any proper case—although there may be certain increased facilities under proclamation—if it be necessary, a change of venue cannot be obtained? There is no such proof, and therefore the charge is reduced to this—the giving up of secret inquiry, which I believe was seldom used by the late Government in Ireland, and which certainly did not prove effective. We know what the state of things was after the Government had for six years the government of that country under their charge, and it seems ridiculous to suggest that all would have been well, or likely to have been well, if only these two weapons had remained in our hands and to ask us again to possess ourselves of these weapons. To suggest that is simply inviting the Government to trifle with the condition of things that exists in Clare at the present time. This discussion would have been much more fruitful if noble Lords could have suggested to us some means by which to cope and grapple with the present con-

dition of things in County Clare. The noble Earl who was once Lord Lieutenant of Ireland (Earl Cowper) made use of strong language towards Her Majesty's Ministers. I should have rather thought that one who filled that high office in a time when Ireland was in a state of violence and disorder, who wielded for a long time great powers, and who yet found that in spite of those powers he was not able to cope with and put an end to the state of things which existed, would have seen that it is not enough to say the Government has a duty to put an end to it. The only advantageous thing you can do is, if you wish crime to be put an end to, and if you have knowledge of any means whereby that evil may be successfully combated to suggest those means. The Government are asked what course they intend to pursue. Do noble Lords really think that as regards any question of police administration it would be wise in the interests of law and order in that county to disclose what you are going to do? In many other respects I could mention, if you want to cope with unsatisfactory conditions, the less you say of what you propose or intend or desire to do the better. Matters of this sort are not best helped by public discussion and announcement. Past experience seems to show that the patient use of vigorous administration is probably the most hopeful—the most fruitful means of putting an end to the condition of things which exists, but it is like one of those diseases which we all may behold and regret, but in regard to which even the wisest doctors find it difficult to pronounce what is the best remedy. Her Majesty's Government will not fail, as I am sure no Government would fail, to regard most seriously so grave a state of things as exists, and whilst they cannot take to themselves in the slightest degree blame for its existence, any more than blame would attach to their predecessors, they do not seek to shield themselves under any such appeal to the action of those who have gone before them, but they are perfectly conscious that, as they are intrusted with the Government of the country, they must do all that in them lies to bring about a better state of things in that county. But I would appeal to noble Lords who in previous Administrations have had to

cope with the same evil with the largest powers in their hands which Parliament could give them to enable them to do so, and who could have got further powers if they had known what to ask for, that at least a claim can be made upon them to show some consideration for those who in a few months have not been able to do more than they were able to do in as many years.

#### POLICE ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

Brought from the Commons ; read 1<sup>st</sup> ; and to be printed. (No. 27.)

House adjourned at twenty-five minutes past Seven o'clock, to Monday next, a quarter before Eleven o'clock.

#### HOUSE OF COMMONS,

*Friday, 3rd March 1893.*

The House met at Two of the clock.

#### NEW WRIT.

For Banffshire, *v.* Robert William Duff, Esquire, Governor of the Colony of New South Wales.—(*Mr. Marjoribanks.*)

#### QUESTIONS.

##### PEMBROKE DOCKYARD.

MR. EGERTON ALLEN (Pembroke, &c.) : I beg to ask the Civil Lord of the Admiralty if, looking at the size and importance of the Pembroke Dockyard, he can hold out any hope that the number of apprentices to be entered this year will be raised from the small number which have been entered during the last few years to about the number of 20, which was the number which ruled before the reduction ?

THE CIVIL LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY (MR. EDMUND ROBERTSON, Dundee) : I am happy to inform my hon. and learned Friend that it is proposed to enter 23 apprentices at Pembroke Yard during this year, as against seven in 1892 and six in 1891.



### THE VENTILATION OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS.

**SIR HENRY ROSCOE** (Manchester, S.): I beg to ask the First Commissioner of Works whether the statement is correct that he is not satisfied with the condition of the Ventilation of this House, and that he is about to take steps to have it improved; and whether, if so, he will re-appoint the Committee on Ventilation which sat during the last Session of Parliament?

**THE FIRST COMMISSIONER OF WORKS** (Mr. SHAW LEFEVRE, Bradford, Central): I have been wrongly reported in the Press as having come to an adverse opinion as to the ventilation of this House. Great improvements were effected only recently, in consequence of the recommendations of the Committee to which the hon. Member refers; and sufficient time has not elapsed for determining whether anything more is required.

### THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF SCIENCE.

**SIR HENRY ROSCOE**: I beg to ask the First Commissioner of Works whether he is aware that the accommodation for the teaching of science at the only Government science school in this country—namely, the Royal College of Science, has been generally acknowledged to be altogether inadequate; and whether sketch plans of laboratories for chemistry and physics, proposed to be erected on the newly-acquired Government land west of Exhibition Road, have been prepared by the Professors of Chemistry and Physics, and sent in at the request of the Board of Works; and, if so, whether he is prepared, seeing the importance of the effectual teaching of science, to take steps to have working plans made for new buildings for the above purposes?

**MR. SHAW LEFEVRE**: The accommodation at the Royal College of Science is now undoubtedly inadequate, and in my opinion new buildings must be undertaken at some early opportunity. Block plans were drawn up in 1891 by the Professors of the Royal College of Science, showing a suggested appropriation of the land on the south side of Imperial Institute Road, for the purposes both of the Royal College of Science and of the Science Museum, and these plans were submitted to the Office of

Works. But that Department pointed out that it would be premature for them to consider the plans until the Science and Art Department had obtained the sanction of the Treasury to an organisation of their Teaching and Exhibition Establishments on the scale contemplated in the plans. I understand that the Science and Art Department are now in communication with the Treasury in this sense.

**SIR HENRY ROSCOE**: Will the Report from the Science and Art Department be shortly issued, or shall we have a long time to wait for it?

**MR. SHAW LEFEVRE**: I do not think it will be a Report of a nature to be issued to Parliament, but I should be glad to show it to the hon. Member privately if he wishes.

### NIGHT SIGNALS AT SEA.

**MR. LENG** (Dundee): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether his attention has been directed to the ingenious invention of Captain James Fairweather, of Dundee, under which, at the cost of a few shillings, by the addition of a single lamp to those required on board of all steamers, the commercial code of signals can be utilised during the night; and whether, considering the importance of vessels being enabled easily to communicate with each other between sundown and sunrise as well as in daylight, the Board will facilitate this nocturnal extension of the commercial code?

**THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE** (Mr. MUNDELLA, Sheffield, Brightside): My attention has been directed to Captain Fairweather's system of signals. But having regard to the opinion adverse to use of coloured lights for night signalling at sea, as expressed in the final Act of the Washington Maritime Conference, I am not prepared, as at present advised, to recommend any general system of signalling at night. The conclusion of the Conference to which I refer is printed at page 61 of Parliamentary Paper C. 6664 of 1892.

### THE ATLANTIC MAILS.

**MR. LENG**: I beg to ask the Postmaster General what precautions are taken to prevent the contents of mail bags being seriously damaged by the flooding of mail rooms on board of Atlantic steamers; whether the mail

bags are waterproof, or the mail rooms enclosed in water-tight bulkheads, so that valuable documents and publications may not be reduced to pulp; whether his attention has been called to the recent flooding of the mail room of the steamer *Pavonia*, on her passage from Boston to Queenstown, and the injury sustained by a valuable postal packet, along with many other cases, in which it was impossible to repair the damage sustained; and whether the Post Office will grant compensation to those who have suffered loss from the irreparable condition of the contents of their letters and packets?

THE POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. A. MORLEY, Nottingham, E.): So far as conveyance by British mail packets is concerned, the precaution taken is to stipulate in every contract that suitable and secure mail rooms shall be provided on board the contract packets. Water-tight bulkheads are not specified in the contracts, and water-proof bags are not used for the mails. Damage by water on board a British mail packet is of uncommon occurrence, and such a thing as the flooding of a mail room is almost unheard of in the Service. The *Pavonia* was not carrying mails under contract with the British Post Office, but by arrangement with that of the United States of America. Hence the British Post Office could have no responsibility whatever in respect of the sea conveyance. But even if such an accident as befel the *Pavonia* had occurred to a British contract packet, the senders of letters and packets damaged by water would have no claim against the Post Office.

MR. LENG: Might I ask the right hon. Gentleman whether, in view to the serious accident to the mails by the *Pavonia*, he will, when further contracts are entered into, keep in view the desirability of having water-tight bulk-head compartments?

MR. A. MORLEY: Yes, Sir; I will keep that suggestion in view.

#### THE CANEWDON CHARITIES.

MAJOR RASCH (Essex, S.E.): I beg to ask the Charity Commissioner whether he is aware that J. Whitwell, labourer, 75 years old, had notice to quit a cottage the property of the Canewdon Charities, and was subsequently fined for

refusing to give up possession; and if the property of those Charities could be dispensed, as intended by the donors, for the relief of the deserving poor, and not devoted to other and totally different purposes?

MR. T. E. ELLIS (Merionethshire): The Charity Commissioners have no knowledge of the determination of the tenancy of J. Whitwell or the attendant circumstances. The accounts, however, of the Charity for 1889, 1890, and 1891, show that in each of these years arrears of rent were due from a tenant of the Charity property of that name. It has already been pointed out to the hon. Member, on three several occasions in answer to questions put by him or to inquiries made in the course of Debate, that this Charity is governed by a scheme made by the Court of Chancery in 1852, prior to the establishment of the Charity Commission, and that no modification of that scheme can be effected by the Commissioners except upon an application from a majority of the present Trustees.

MAJOR RASCH: Will the right hon. Gentleman take steps to see that this Charity is devoted to the use of those for whom it was originally intended?

MR. T. E. ELLIS: In a Charity of over £50, the Charity Commissioners can take no steps except at the initiative of the Charity Trustees. If any scheme is submitted to them they will be prepared to consider it, or they will be glad if Parliament will give them power to deal with charities over £50.

MAJOR RASCH: I will call attention to this matter on the Estimates, and move a reduction of the Vote.

#### THE PROFESSORSHIP OF SANSKRIT AT MADRAS COLLEGE.

MR. NAOROJI (Finsbury, Central): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India whether, on the resignation in this present month of March of Dr. G. Oppert, Professor of Sanscrit in the Madras Presidency College, the Secretary of State for India will recommend the Madras Government to appoint a Native of India to the Professorship in succession to Dr. Oppert, which recommendation will, it is said, be in accordance with the views of the Education Commission?

\*THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA (Mr. GEORGE RUSSELL, North Beds.): The Secretary of State has already called the attention of the Government of India to the desirability of appointing a Native of India to succeed Dr. Oppert as Professor of Sanscrit, if a Native fitted for the post is available.

#### MILITIA OFFICERS.

Mr. DAVIES (Pembrokeshire): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether, under the present Militia Regulations, while a Commanding Officer of a Militia regiment is permitted to inspect the recruits once or twice only during the course of the recruit drill, he has no official status whatever; and whether he is prepared to amend the Regulations so as to permit a Commanding Officer who may take an interest in the recruit drill to inspect the recruits whenever and as often as he pleases; and, further, that he should be entitled to draw some nominal pay or forage allowance during this period so as to give him an official status?

\*THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (Mr. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN, Stirling, &c.): Under the Militia Regulations the Commanding Officer may inspect his recruits from time to time; and I do not find that the number of inspections is limited. The Committee of 1890, which fully investigated the wants of the Militia, recommended that the Commanding Officer should be encouraged to inspect the recruits; but they did not make any recommendation as to his payment.

#### SOLDIERS AND NATIONAL EMBLEMS.

COLONEL LOCKWOOD (Essex, Epping): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War what limit, if any, he proposes to place upon the amount of personal decoration, in the form of National badges, to be worn by individual soldiers on any National festival day?

\*MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: Until there is shown to be need to the contrary, I think this may well be included in the discretion given to Commanding Officers.

COLONEL LOCKWOOD: May I ask whether the permission will be extended to soldiers on duty as well as those off duty?

\*MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: That naturally would be left entirely to the discretion of Commanding Officers, who, as I said yesterday, are the best judges in the matter.

#### THE SCOTCH EQUIVALENT GRANT.

Mr. HOZIER (Lanarkshire, S.): I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland whether, in order to prevent inconvenience, he will arrange that the Parochial Boards of Scotland shall receive their shares of the Equivalent Grant before the close of the current financial year of the Parochial Boards, that is to say, before the 14th of May next?

THE SECRETARY FOR SCOTLAND (Sir G. TREVELYAN, Glasgow, Bridgeton): I am sorry that, owing to the great increase of work lately thrown on the Scottish Office, I cannot promise that the shares of the Equivalent Grant will be issued by the 14th May. Every effort is being made to get through the work, and now that the Treasury have consented to reinforce the strength of the Office, it is hoped that arrears will not occur again. The necessity must have been very great to induce the Treasury to consent to the increase of the staff at the Office.

#### RE-DIRECTED POSTCARDS.

Mr. HOZIER: I beg to ask the Postmaster General whether letters with halfpenny stamps, wrappers, and postcards require to be re-stamped on re-direction; and, if so, whether he can see his way to place them, in this respect, on the same footing as ordinary letters?

Mr. A. MORLEY: Yes, Sir; the articles in question require to be re-stamped. The present Rules as to re-direction was framed in 1891, when, after full consideration, it was decided not to allow the free re-direction of articles sent at the halfpenny rate. I am not prepared to recommend a departure from that decision.

#### VACCINATION.

Mr. PICTON (Leicester): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he can now say when he will bring in a Bill to carry out the recommendations of the interim Report of the Royal Commission on Vaccination?

\*THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. H. GLADSTONE, Leeds, W.): I shall put down the Bill for Monday next.

DR. FARQUHARSON (Aberdeen-shire, W.): Considering the great importance of this question, will the hon. Gentleman introduce the Bill at such an hour as will allow full and adequate discussion?

\*MR. H. GLADSTONE: I am afraid I cannot say that. The Bill must take its chance.

#### THE ROYAL HORSE ARTILLERY— GUNS.

MR. ARNOLD-FORSTER (Belfast, W.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether any pattern of light 12-pounder gun has yet been approved for the Royal Horse Artillery; and, if so, how soon the batteries will be supplied with such gun; and whether any pattern of field howitzer has yet been approved for service for the Army?

\*MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: No pattern of 12-pounder gun lighter than that now with the Royal Horse Artillery has yet been approved, but a light gun is nearly ready for trial. A field howitzer is at present under trial.

MR. ARNOLD-FORSTER: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War what is the number of 9-pounder muzzle-loading field guns, now in possession of the Royal Artillery in India, at Home, and elsewhere; what is the number of 12-pounder breech-loading field guns at present available for service; and what reserve of such guns exists?

\*MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: I have already written to the hon. Member, who will, I feel sure, agree with me that it would be very inadvisable to make public the details he asks for.

#### SMALL INVESTMENTS IN GOVERNMENT STOCK.

MR. HORACE PLUNKETT (Dublin Co., S.): I beg to ask the Postmaster General whether any depositor in a Post Office Savings Bank can purchase Government Stock at the current price in connection with his savings bank account; whether as small a sum as 1s. may be thus invested; whether the commission

charged on sums not exceeding 10s. varies from  $7\frac{1}{2}$  to 75 per cent.; and whether, in view of the advisability of encouraging such investments by the poor, he will consider the propriety of doing the business of small investors for a lower commission?

MR. A. MORLEY: The answers to the first three paragraphs are in the affirmative. The charge for investment, including receipt of dividends and payment to the accounts of depositors in the savings bank, is 9d. for any amount of Stock not exceeding £25. As the rate of interest on Stock is only very slightly higher than the rate of interest on ordinary savings bank deposits, I see no advantage in encouraging depositors to make purchases of a few shillings worth of Stock instead of making ordinary deposits in the savings bank, for which no charge is made. I understand that brokers make a minimum charge of 2s. 6d. on any transaction of the kind.

MR. BARTLEY (Islington, N.): Was not the object of this arrangement to encourage holders of small sums to become investors in Government Stock; and will not the right hon. Gentleman do away with every restriction calculated to prevent persons from investing in the funds of the country, as they do in France for instance?

MR. A. MORLEY: I am in favour of doing away with every restriction that I possibly can.

#### MILITARY DRILL FOR TELEGRAPH BOYS.

MR. CREMER (Shoreditch, Haggerston): I beg to ask the Postmaster General if he will inform the House of the precise nature of the conditions under which the boy messengers in the Telegraph Service attend military drill; whether the conditions were framed and imposed by his Predecessor; whether the conditions are still being enforced; and why it is considered necessary that boys in the Telegraph Service should be taught military drill?

MR. A. MORLEY: The boys are expected to attend one drill per week, or at the most two. No drill lasts more than one hour, and under no circumstances is drill imposed as a punishment. The messengers are paid at the ordinary rate.

while engaged at drill. The answers to the second and third paragraphs are in the affirmative. The object of the drills, which I should describe as physical drills, rather than as military drills, is to give the messengers a smarter appearance, to make them take a pride in their uniform and keep it in good order, and generally to increase their efficiency.

**MR. CREMER :** Is any penalty imposed on the boys for declining to attend the drill ?

**MR. A. MORLEY :** I must ask for notice of that question.

#### POSTAL IRREGULARITIES IN LONDON.

**MR. CREMER :** I beg to ask the Postmaster General if he will cause inquiries to be instituted into the complaints which have for some time been made by residents in the North-Eastern District of the Metropolis concerning the irregularity and delay which frequently occurs in the postal delivery ?

**MR. A. MORLEY :** I am not aware of the complaints referred to by my hon. Friend ; but I shall be happy to have inquiries made, and to let him know the result.

#### CARLOWAY HARBOUR CONTRACT.

**MR. WEIR** (Ross and Cromarty) : I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland whether the contract for the Carloway Harbour Works is signed ; if not, why not, and if signed, why operations have not been commenced ; and whether he is aware that there is great distress at the present time in the Island of Lewis, and that hundreds of Lewis men would be glad to find employment on those works at an average pay of 2s. 3d. per day ?

**SIR G. TREVELYAN :** The contract for the Carloway Harbour would have been signed some time ago, had not a sudden difficulty arisen from the contractor believing that the people of Carloway demanded a higher wage than the contractor thought he could give. I am glad to be able to inform the hon. Member that all difficulty has been got over, and only yesterday a letter was written asking the Trustees to have the contract signed and the work commenced

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at once. It is believed that work was actually begun on the Carloway Road yesterday, so there should be no want of employment for the Lewis men for some time to come.

#### BANKRUPTCY FEES.

**MR. WEIR :** I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade why an *employé* in the office of the Official Receiver, 33, Carey Street, who until lately appropriated fees for administering oaths for persons calling at that office in connection with the business of the Department, refuses to return fees so collected in one case whilst he has returned them in another ?

**MR. MUNDELLA :** The fees in question being the ordinary personal fees payable to a Commissioner appointed to administer oaths, I have not thought it necessary to inquire whether, or why, they were remitted in a particular case.

#### THE METROPOLITAN WATER SUPPLY COMMISSION.

**MR. T. W. RUSSELL** (Tyrone, S.) : I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury when the Metropolitan Water Supply Commission was resolved upon by the Government, and at what period its first meeting was held ?

\***THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY** (Sir J. T. HIBBERT, Oldham) : The Royal Warrant appointing the Commission was dated 15th March, 1892, and the Treasury learned the fact on the 17th *idem* from the Home Office in the usual manner. I am not aware when the first meeting took place.

#### MOONLIGHTING OUTRAGES.

**COLONEL SAUNDERSON** (Armagh, N.) : I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he can state, in relation to the Returns of agrarian outrages recently issued, whether there have been any moonlighting outrages during the period from 20th August, 1892, to 28th February, 1893, that have been returned as non-agrarian, and therefore not included in the Return ; and, if so, how many ?

**MR. J. MORLEY :** The Constabulary Authorities report that during the period

23rd August, 1892, to 28th February, 1893, there were 25 outrages of the nature referred to in this question. The following are the details:—firing at the person, 1; firing into dwelling, 9; intimidation (otherwise than by threatening letter or notice), 10; robbery of arms, 1; house attack, 1; aggravated assault, 1; demand of money, 1; and burglary (by moonlighters), 1; total, 25.

**MR. SEXTON (Kerry, N.):** May I ask whether the principle of enumeration of the agrarian outrages for the period named in the question is the same as in previous years; and whether there were in previous years moonlighting outrages not included in the agrarian crimes?

**MR. J. MORLEY:** That is so. The principle of classification is exactly the same, and non-agrarian outrages were no more included in previous years than in the present year.

#### QUESTION TROUBLES.

**MR. KNATCHBULL-HUGESSEN (Kent, Faversham):** I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether he is now prepared to take any steps for checking the great waste of public time occasioned by the increasing practice of putting questions of mere local and trivial importance to Ministers, either by having the answers printed and distributed, or by restricting the number of questions allowed to be put by any one Member, or by only allowing questions on public matters to be put, or in any other way?

**THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Sir W. HARCOURT, Derby):** My right hon. Friend has asked me to say that he does not think he is at present in possession of sufficient information as to the opinions of the House on this subject to undertake to deal with it.

#### CROFTERS' APPEALS.

**MR. WEIR:** I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland when the Crofters' Commission will hear the appeal of John Kennedy, of Arineckaig, Strathcarron; and upon what basis the Commission fixed the fair rent of Kennedy's holding?

**SIR G. TREVELYAN:** I can only confirm the information which I understand the hon. Member has already

received from the Chairman of the Crofters' Commission, that they are not yet in a position to say when Mr. Kennedy's appeal is likely to be heard. The basis on which the fair rent of this holding is settled the Commissioners are not prepared to communicate.

**MR. WEIR:** I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland whether, having regard to the fact that the delegates appointed by the crofters of Balallan and Arivanich have failed to get permission from Mr. Platt, the sporting tenant of Park Deer Forest, Island of Lewis, to inspect the lands which they consider available for crofters, they will be protected from prosecution should they visit the deer forest for the aforesaid purpose without the consent of the persons interested?

**SIR G. TREVELYAN:** I have asked Sheriff Brand, Chairman of the Crofters' Commission of 1892, to inquire into the case, and he will do so.

#### SCOTCH PAROCHIAL MEDICAL OFFICERS.

**MR. WEIR:** I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland whether, having regard to the fact that the Board of Supervision has no power to prevent parochial medical officers who are remunerated out of a Government grant undertaking the duties of County Councillors, steps will be taken to declare such medical officers disqualified if their work connected with the County Council necessitate an absence of more than a few hours from their parishes?

**SIR G. TREVELYAN:** A parochial medical officer is not disqualified by law, as the hon. Member justly states, from sitting on the County Council, and I do not think that if he enjoys the confidence of his neighbours he should be disqualified on grounds of public policy.

#### COMPULSORY VACCINATION.

**MR. HOPWOOD (Lancashire, S.E., Middleton):** I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board whether his attention has been called to an order by the Guardians of Wigton, Cumberland, that the child of an inmate of the workhouse should, in spite of the refusal

of the mother, be vaccinated; whether there is any authority by Law for such a proceeding; and whether he will communicate with the Guardians on the subject?

**THE SECRETARY TO THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD** (Sir W. B. FOSTER, Derby, Ilkeston): I am informed by the Guardians of the Wigton Union that a fatal case of small-pox occurred at the workhouse on 3rd February, and that the child referred to had occupied a ward close to that in which the small-pox patient had died. The medical officer of the workhouse, under these circumstances, deemed it necessary that the child should be vaccinated. The mother objected, but the vaccination was authorised at an emergency meeting of the Guardians, and the child was vaccinated accordingly. Upon the facts stated, I have no doubt that the Guardians acted in the interests of the child, and of the other inmates of the workhouse; but in the opinion of the Local Government Board the children of the inmates of a workhouse should not be vaccinated when the parent objects, and the Wigton Guardians will be informed accordingly.

**MR. HOPWOOD**: Is there any law—I know there is not—by which vaccination can be performed if the parent objects?

**SIR W. FOSTER**: That is a question of law on which it is not for me to give an opinion; but my own opinion is that vaccination cannot be legally performed under the circumstances if the mother objects.

#### THE COUNTY MAGISTRACY.

**MR. DODD** (Essex, Maldon): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he is aware that, in the County of Worcester, out of 257 County Justices, 12 only belong to the Liberal Party, whilst 245 belong to the Party now in opposition to Her Majesty's Government; if he will call the attention of the Lord Chancellor to this great disproportion; and if he is not aware of these facts will he inquire into them?

\***MR. H. GLADSTONE**: I am aware that in this and in other counties there is a great disproportion between the number of Liberal and Conservative Magistrates. I have no reason to doubt, but I have no means of verifying, the precise

figures stated by my hon. Friend. I have brought the matter under the notice of the Lord Chancellor.

**SIR T. LEA** (Londonderry, S.): May I ask whether it is not possible to obtain a little more accurate information than that contained in the question; and whether it is not a fact that on the list of Worcestershire Magistrates at the present time there are about a dozen gentlemen who contested Parliamentary elections as strong Liberals, and a great many more who actively supported them?

**MR. LODER** (Brighton): I beg also to ask is it not a fact that political considerations enter very largely into the appointment of Borough Magistrates; and if the Lord Chancellor has not appointed a large number of known and avowed supporters of the Government to the Magistracy on borough Benches?

**MR. H. GLADSTONE**: A Return is now being prepared by the Home Office, which will give, I think, full information with regard to the questions now put. When the figures are before the House hon. Members will draw their own conclusions.

**MR. MOWBRAY** (Lancashire, Prestwich): Will it give the dates when the appointments were made?

**MR. H. GLADSTONE**: Yes.

**MR. J. G. LAWSON** (York, N.R., Thirsk): May I ask whether, in preparing the Return, he will say what evidence of political opinion he required in the case of gentlemen charged with being opposed to Her Majesty's Government?

**MR. H. GLADSTONE**: Hon. Members will have to draw their own conclusions from the facts as given in the Return.

**MR. BARTLEY**: Is it not an infringement of the Ballot Act to cross-question those who are to be appointed Magistrates?

**MR. MACFARLANE** (Argyll): Is the Return to extend to the whole country?

**MR. H. GLADSTONE**: I think it is limited to England and Wales.

**SIR J. GOLDSMID** (St. Pancras, S.): May I ask whether it is the practice of Lord Lieutenants when recommending Magistrates to inquire into their politics?

**MR. H. GLADSTONE:** My opportunities for knowing anything about the motives of Lord Lieutenants are singularly limited.

**SIR J. GOLDSMID:** I did not ask what their motives were; I asked whether it is the practice.

**DR. MAC GREGOR** (Inverness-shire): Cannot the Inquiry be extended to Scotland?

**MR. H. GLADSTONE:** I know of no reason why, if it is asked for by the Secretary for Scotland, it should not extend to Scotland.

#### ABOLITION OF PROPERTY QUALIFICATION.

**MR. DODD:** I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether Her Majesty's Government proposes to ask this House to assent to the abolition of the property qualification now required for County Justices; and, if so, how it is proposed to deal with the present practice of requiring gentlemen to have the recommendation or nomination of the Lord Lieutenant of the county as a condition of their appointment?

**MR. H. GLADSTONE:** The Bill of which the Home Secretary has given notice, but which he has not yet been allowed to introduce, will, if passed into law, abolish the property qualification of County Justices. The Government have no present intention of proposing legislation on the subject of the recommendation or nomination of County Justices.

**MR. FENWICK** (Northumberland, Wansbeck): Arising out of that answer, may I ask if the Government will afford facilities for the Bill of my hon. Friend the Member for the Maldon Division of Essex, which proposes to abolish the property qualification for County Magistrates, so that working men in counties, like their fellows in towns, may be able to sit on the Magisterial Bench?

**MR. H. GLADSTONE:** I must ask for notice of that question.

#### APPOINTMENT OF JUSTICES OF THE PEACE.

**MR. WASON** (Ayrshire, S.): I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland whether he is aware that in Ayrshire there is a great disproportion between the number of Members of the Liberal Party who

have been appointed Justices of the Peace for that county and of those who belong to the Party in opposition to Her Majesty's Government; and whether, if so, he will inform the Lord Chancellor of the fact in order that steps may be taken towards rectifying the disproportion?

**MR. COCHRANE** (Ayrshire, N.): May I ask whether the Lord Lieutenant of Ayrshire was not appointed by the present Prime Minister; whether, since 1878, the Lord Lieutenant has not appointed 118 Liberal and Liberal Unionist Magistrates and only 83 Conservatives; whether there is any instance in which the private political opinions of the Magistrates has interfered with the public discharge of their duty; and whether it is proposed that steps should be taken to compel Justices of the Peace to change their political opinions to suit those of the Secretary for Scotland?

**\*MR. DODD:** Is there any law vesting the appointment of Magistrates in the Lord Lieutenant?

**SIR G. TREVELYAN:** The law on the subject is very simple. The law is that the Lord Chancellor appoints; the custom is that the Lord Lieutenant practically appoints. With regard to the question by the hon. Member below the Gangway, it is quite evident that in the County of Ayr there would be no difficulty in making out the Return to which attention has been called, because the substance of that Return is evidently a matter of public knowledge in Ayrshire. With respect to my hon. Friend's question, if he will lay a statement before me I am prepared to communicate it to the Lord Chancellor, as I am prepared to communicate the statement made by the hon. Member below the Gangway.

**SIR H. MAXWELL** (Wigton): Will the right hon. Gentleman undertake, when any Return is laid before the Lord Chancellor in order to enable him to form a judgment upon this question, that it will be clearly shown, in indicating the politics of the present Justices, how long they had been in opposition to Her Majesty's Government, and whether they were appointed originally by a Liberal Lord Lieutenant as members of the Liberal Party?

**SIR J. FERGUSSON** (Manchester, N.E.): I should like to ask whether, in undertaking to make this reference to the Lord Chancellor, the right hon. Gentle-



man has any reason to believe that the Lord Lieutenant of Ayrshire has not made his recommendations with perfect impartiality?

SIR G. TREVELYAN: I have no reason to believe either one way or the other. But when a statement of a great practical grievance is laid before the Government inquiry ought to be made, and all the Lord Chancellor has promised is an inquiry. He will inquire into the question whether any such grievance exists, and will not go upon the first aspect of the facts as laid before him.

SIR H. MAXWELL: That does not answer my question.

SIR G. TREVELYAN: The Lord Chancellor will not act upon statistics laid before him by a private Member. If these allegations are such as to call for any inquiry he will make that inquiry, and I have no doubt that inquiry will include the question of the date of the appointment.

SIR H. MAXWELL: I have not asked what the Lord Chancellor will do. I wish to know whether the right hon. Gentleman will lay before him the statistics I have mentioned—namely, how many of the Justices were appointed by a Liberal Lord Lieutenant as members of the Liberal Party?

SIR G. TREVELYAN: The Lord Chancellor will find the information more accurately for himself. I have not given him any statistics.

SIR H. MAXWELL: You said you would supply statistics to him.

SIR G. TREVELYAN: I said I would supply to him any statements furnished me as to agreements said to exist.

MR. HUNTER (Aberdeen, N.): Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that under a Statute, 27 Henry 8, no person has any authority to make Justices of the Peace, that they can only be made under the King's Great Seal, by the authority of the King's Highness, or by that of his heir; and whether, if a custom has arisen in violation of that Act of Parliament, he will see that it is more honoured in the breach than in the observance?

SIR G. TREVELYAN: I must ask for notice of that.

SIR J. FERGUSSON: On what grounds does the right hon. Gentleman propose to represent to the Lord

Chancellor that a grievance exists in Ayrshire?

MR. BARTLEY: I would ask the right hon. Gentleman to be very particular as to the date, because, take the right hon. Gentleman himself, he would be in one category at one time, and in another category at another date.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, order!

#### THE SUGAR BOUNTIES CONVENTION.

MR. BAIRD (Glasgow, Central): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether any of the sugar-producing countries represented at the Conference on Sugar Bounties have taken steps to carry out the first Article of the Convention; and, if so, which?

\*THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Sir E. GREY, Northumberland, Berwick): The Convention was not ratified by any of the Signatory Powers, and, therefore, has never come into operation. The German and Belgian Governments have taken measures to effect, to some extent, the object of the first Article of the Convention. We are not aware that action has been taken by any other countries.

#### NEWFOUNDLAND FISHERIES.

MR. CHARLES SHAW (Stafford): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether, in any future negotiations which may be entered upon with the French Government with regard to the questions connected with the Newfoundland fisheries, the Government will take into consideration the necessity of obtaining a reduction of the prohibitory tariffs at present imposed upon British goods, especially fish hooks, levied as and from 10th January, 1893, in the islands of St. Pierre and Miquelou?

SIR E. GREY: The hardship inflicted by the present tariffs will be borne in mind in any future negotiations with the French Government.

#### BONÂ-FIDE TRAVELLERS.

MR. WOODS (Lancashire, Ince): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he is aware that a recent decision given in the Queen's Bench Division by a Court consisting of five of Her Majesty's Judges (one, Justice Cave, dissenting) has

caused considerable misunderstanding in the Courts of Law as to the interpretation of the words "*bonâ fide* travellers"; and whether, by legislation or otherwise, he will take steps to give greater clearness to the definition?

\*MR. H. GLADSTONE: My hon. Friend, no doubt, refers to the case of "*Penn v. Alexander*," decided on 5th February last. The decision was concurred in by four Judges out of five. Its effect appears to be that if the primary or main object of a journey is to obtain liquor the person making it is not a *bonâ fide* traveller within the meaning of the Licensing Acts. This would seem to be a clear and intelligible rule, and so far as it goes not to need further definition by legislation.

#### THE RAILWAY RATES.

MR. WARNER (Somerset, N.): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he has received from the representatives of any of the Railway Companies any proposal which is likely to terminate the present unsatisfactory state of the railway rates dispute and give satisfaction to traders?

MR. MUNDELLA: Yes, Sir; I have received this morning very important communications from three large companies, all indicating a desire to come to a speedy understanding with the traders. The companies in question are the Great Northern, the Midland, and the Great Eastern. I have also heard, on good authority, that other companies are about to take the same steps. I propose, if we have a Debate to-night on the question, to submit the letters I have received to the House.

MR. JACKS (Stirlingshire): Has the right hon. Gentleman received any reply from the Scotch Companies?

MR. MUNDELLA: No, Sir; I have not received any specific reply from Scotland. The companies are now indicating separately the line they propose to take.

\*SIR J. GOLDSMID: Have not the companies undertaken that any reductions agreed upon shall date back from January 1st?

MR. MUNDELLA: Whatever revised rates may ultimately come into force, they will date back to January 1.

MR. HUNTER: May I ask whether the Government will consent to the

appointment of a Select Committee to inquire into the recent increase of railway rates, and to examine whether any, and what, precautions can be adopted to protect the public from unreasonable charges for the conveyance of goods?

MR. MUNDELLA: I think it is undoubtedly desirable and necessary that there shall be ultimately some inquiry, but I think that, as the Government will be prepared, in the first instance, to move a Committee, it would be hardly desirable to propose a Committee before Easter, while negotiations are going on. Immediately after Easter I think such an inquiry ought to be instituted, and will have a very good result.

#### WELSH INTERMEDIATE EDUCATION.

SIR RICHARD TEMPLE (Surrey, Kingston): I beg to ask the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education whether he can say for how many of the new secondary schools, to be established under the Welsh Intermediate Education Act of 1889, have Schemes been drawn up and sanctioned; how many of these new schools are at the present time in full working order; and what provision, if any, has been made, under the above Act, for staffing the newly-established secondary schools with properly trained teachers?

THE VICE PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL (MR. ACLAND, York, W.R., Rotherham): No Scheme under the Welsh Intermediate Education Act has yet been sanctioned by the Queen in Council. Three Schemes have been framed and submitted by the Charity Commissioners to the Education Department, of which two have been approved by the Department. There are, therefore, no new schools in working order, and it is not possible to state what provision has been made for teachers.

#### THE DISCUSSION OF SUPPLEMENTAL ESTIMATES.

MR. BROMLEY - DAVENPORT (Cheshire, Macclesfield): I wish to ask the hon. Member for Kerry whether he is correctly reported in *The Times*, *Daily News*, and other London morning papers to have stated in the course of last night's Debate—"Order!"

\*MR. SPEAKER: Order, order! The incident has been disposed of.

**MR. BROMLEY-DAVENPORT :** On a point of Order, I would ask you, Sir, whether, in view of the fact that the Chairman did not hear the words last night, we have now any opportunity of raising the question ?

**MR. SPEAKER :** The question ought to have been raised at the moment. It cannot be raised now as a question of Order.

**MR. BROMLEY-DAVENPORT :** We did raise it at the moment.

**MR. SPEAKER :** The incident is closed, and it is no longer a question of Order. It is a matter entirely for the Chairman to deal with.

**SIR W. HARCOURT :** May I ask you, Mr. Speaker, whether you will state, for the information of the House, what has been of late years the Rule relating to the intention in the discussion of Supplementary Estimates as to debating the question of principles belonging to the original Estimate to which the Vote is supplementary, especially as set forth in the Report and Evidence taken by the Committee on Estimates in the year 1885 ?

**\*MR. SPEAKER :** I have always, since I have been in the Chair, manifested great reluctance to answer any question which might seem to be in the nature of an appeal from the Chairman of Committees to myself ; but the way in which the right hon. Gentleman has put his question clearly indicates to me that he does not wish to refer to me as a Court of Appeal. I wish to dissociate myself entirely and absolutely from anything that occurred last night. The question has only been put to me since I came into the Chair to-day, and I will endeavour to answer it to the best of my ability. Undoubtedly of late years a certain restriction has been placed upon the discussions of Supplementary Estimates, and they have been restrictions to the items which form the bulk of the Supplementary Estimates. As a general rule, on the Supplementary Estimates it is in order to discuss only the particular items which constitute the Supplementary Estimates, and the sub-heads of the original Estimates can only be referred to so far as they are involved in the fair discussion of the points contained in the items asked for in the Supplementary Estimates. Of course it is quite obvious it would be improper, as a

general rule, to raise on a Supplementary Estimate the whole question of policy involved in the original Estimate, but, as I have stated, the discussion is properly confined to the items of the Supplementary Estimate. I think, however, that I ought to state that items of Supplementary Estimates may raise in themselves questions of policy, but the interpretation whether they do raise questions of policy or not must clearly be left to the Chairman of Committees. If I may be allowed to illustrate what I mean, I would say the question of the draining of any particular house in Constantinople would clearly not raise the whole question of Foreign Embassies. But on the other hand, a Vote which would largely increase the Vote for a railway to Uganda might raise the whole question of the policy involved in the original Vote for Uganda. I do not know that I need say anything else but that I entirely sever myself from anything that occurred last night. The question has been asked me, and it is quite true that restriction has been placed upon the discussion of items in Supplementary Estimates, and the question whether principles are involved, either new principles or principles which were originally involved in the original Estimates, must be one entirely at the discretion of the gentleman who occupies, and worthily occupies, the Chair.

#### THE PRACTICE OF PAIRING.

**SIR W. PEARCE (Plymouth) :** I beg to ask the Patronage Secretary of the Treasury whether he will inform the House how many Members of the Government Party who "paired" at 7 p.m. yesterday voted in the 7.25 p.m. Division, as I know of two. Can the right hon. Gentleman suggest some better arrangement ?

**THE PATRONAGE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (MR. MARJORIBANKS, Berwickshire) :** I am certainly not able to say how many Members who were paired voted in the Division at 7.25 yesterday. Of course, hon. Members who were paired prior to that hour were not justified in so voting. I am sure that any hon. Member who did so vote did so from inadvertence and not from malice prepense. As a matter of fact, the practice of pairing is not recognised by the House itself. It is purely a question

of private arrangement between individual Members, and I am sure that all hon. Members on both sides of the House will wish strictly to adhere to the terms of the pledges they have given.

MR. CROSFIELD (Lincoln): May I ask the right hon. Gentleman whether his attention has been drawn to the fact that the two clocks in the Lobby are not synchronised, and that those who, like myself, paired until half-past 7 last night might have voted in the Division at 7.25 if they had gone into the Lobby by the clock which was timed before the other clock?

MR. MARJORIBANKS: I am sure the hon. Member will excuse me from becoming the corrector of the clocks of the House in addition to my other work.

#### THE EXPORT OF PIG-IRON.

COLONEL HOWARD VINCENT (Sheffield, Central): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether the exports of British iron and steel were last year 1,440,000 tons less than they were in 1889, and that the production of pig-iron in the United Kingdom was 1,840,000 tons less in 1892 than in 1889; and in such case, having regard to the serious consequences to all engaged in the iron trade, what steps Her Majesty's Government propose to take?

MR. MUNDELLA: The Board of Trade have no official Returns of the production of pig-iron, but the hon. Member has correctly stated the falling off in the exports of iron and steel. The year 1889 was one of the highest years of export in the iron and steel trade, and the falling off began immediately after the financial crisis of 1890. The chief decline is in exports to the Argentine Republic, to Australasia, and similar countries, due to the financial disturbance in those countries. These crises are beyond the control of Governments. After similar fluctuations there has always been a recovery in exports.

MR. JACKS: May I ask whether the right hon. Gentleman is aware that in 1870 the exports of Germany and Belgium to neutral markets was only 20 per cent., and in 1891 36 per cent.; and whether he is aware that in 1870 Germany exported nothing to this country, and in 1891 98,249 tons against exports from this country of 55,293 tons; and, further,

whether there is any explanation of the reason for this serious state of affairs?

MR. MUNDELLA: I am afraid I can not answer this question, but admitting the facts to be as the hon. Member has stated them, I cannot see what steps the Government are to take in order to increase the export of iron and steel, or to increase the production of pig-iron. These questions depended entirely on the financial state of the country, and had nothing to do with the Government.

\*COLONEL HOWARD VINCENT: Are not the foreign prohibitory tariffs largely to blame, and can no steps be taken to get them reduced?

MR. MUNDELLA: The hon. Member must know that the tariffs have been reviewed within the last year, and the present tariffs are a reduction. We are looking forward to some change in America which will be beneficial to trade.

#### BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR (Manchester, E.): What will be the course of business on Monday and next week generally?

SIR W. HARCOURT: The Navy Estimates will be the first Order on Monday, as has already been announced. As to the business on the subsequent days of the week, I can make no announcement at present.

#### THE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE.

MAJOR RASCH (Essex, S.E.): May I ask when the Committee on Agriculture will be appointed?

SIR W. HARCOURT: The appointment of the Committee depends on the action of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Sleaford and the supporters of the Amendment of which he has given notice. The Minister for Agriculture is very anxious to proceed with the matter, but the Amendment of the right hon. Gentleman is practically an Amendment designed to defeat the Motion. Therefore, the question of when the Motion will be brought forward depends upon the conduct of the supporters of the Amendment.

MR. MACARTNEY (Antrim, S.): Are not the Government supposed to have a majority in this House? I cannot, in the circumstances, quite understand what the right hon. Gentleman means.

## THE ARMY ESTIMATES.

MR. E. STANHOPE (Lincolnshire, Horncastle): When will the Army Estimates, promised us on Wednesday, be circulated?

\*MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: I am sorry that more copies of the Army Estimates have not hitherto been available. I have been disappointed in the matter, but I hope that to-morrow morning, at the very latest, copies will be sent to every hon. Member.

## FREE SCHOOL BOOKS.

MR. CROMBIE (Kincardineshire): I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland whether it is the case in Scotland (as the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education has explained to a correspondent it is in England) that School Boards are bound to provide a proper supply of books and other school apparatus, and cannot compel a parent to provide books, either by periodical payment or by purchase?

SIR GEORGE TREVELYAN: The Education (Scotland) Act, 1872, which lays on School Boards the obligation to "maintain and keep efficient every school under their management," has not, so far as I am aware, been interpreted to mean that a School Board are bound to provide school books free of charge for the use of scholars. Neither does the Scotch Code make the provision of school books by the managers a condition for receiving the annual Parliamentary Grant. But many School Boards do provide books free of charge, and the Department recognise such expenditure as legitimate.

## THE GREAT WESTERN RAILWAY COMPANY'S FISH RATES.

SIR WILLIAM PEARCE: I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he is aware that, owing to an increase of over 30 per cent. in the common fish rates between Penzance and Plymouth, a large fleet of fishing boats is sustaining great loss; and whether, in these circumstances, he will make such representations to the Great Western Railway Company as will induce that Company to modify these rates immediately, as no future rebate will benefit the fishermen?

MR. MUNDELLA: No, Sir; I have not had any information upon the point referred to in the hon. Member's question. If he will furnish me with details of the rates complained of, I will cause representations to be made to the Great Western Railway Company.

## EDUCATION GRANTS.

SIR JOSEPH WESTON (Bristol, E.): I beg to ask the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education whether, in consideration of the hardship inflicted upon schools by the limitation of amount of grant to 17s. 6d. on average attendance, Art. 107, Code 1892 (after a much larger grant has been earned), the Department will consider the advisability of its revision, or at least the exemption of instruction in the specific subjects from its operation?

MR. ACLAND: The limit of 17s. 6d., referred to by the hon. Member, is laid down by legislation by Section 19 of the Elementary Education Act, 1876, for what appear to be sound reasons. It is not proposed to introduce fresh legislation with the view of altering it.

## ORDERS OF THE DAY.

SUPPLY—CIVIL SERVICES AND REVENUE DEPARTMENTS, 1892-3 (SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES).

SUPPLY—considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

MR. T. W. RUSSELL (Tyrona, S.): I beg, Mr. Mellor, to draw your attention to the fact that there are no copies of the Supplementary Estimates to be obtained in the office. It is, I think, perfectly impossible to discuss the Estimates in the circumstances, and unless some remedy can be devised, I hold that Progress ought to be reported.

\*THE CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES (MR. MELLOR, York, W.R., Sowerby): That is not a question of Order. It is for the Committee to decide whether they will proceed to consider the Estimates or not.

DR. CLARK (Caithness): Why cannot copies be obtained?

SIR J. T. HIBBERT: I am surprised to hear that copies of the Estimates are not procurable, for any amount were to be had last night.

**MR. T. W. RUSSELL:** They were exhausted by 10 o'clock.

**SIR J. T. HIBBERT:** I understand that the usual number of copies were supplied, but I suppose they have been exhausted in consequence of an unusual demand. I will send to the printers for additional copies at once. I have no doubt there are plenty there.

**MR. A. J. BALFOUR:** How soon?

**SIR J. T. HIBBERT:** I said at once.

**MR. A. J. BALFOUR:** But how soon may they be expected?

**SIR J. T. HIBBERT:** I have no doubt that there are a sufficient number of copies in the hands of hon. Members to justify the Committee in proceeding. I will take steps to have other copies sent to the House immediately.

**MR. A. J. BALFOUR:** It is extremely difficult to carry on the Estimates without the copies.

**MR. DALZIEL (Kirkcaldy, &c.):** Have not the Supplementary Estimates been circulated in the ordinary course to every Member of the House?

**SIR J. T. HIBBERT:** Certainly. Copies were circulated in the usual way on Monday.

#### CLASS I.

1. Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That a Supplementary sum, not exceeding £20,000, be granted to Her Majesty, to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March 1893, for the Expenses of Inland Revenue Buildings and of Post Office and Post Office Telegraph Buildings in Great Britain."

**MR. R. G. WEBSTER (St. Pancras, E.):** Does this Vote include the General Post Office?

**THE CHAIRMAN:** The items are—Inland Revenue Building, Post Office Buildings, and Post Office Telegraph Buildings.

**MR. R. G. WEBSTER:** I do not intend to move the reduction which stands in my name.

**\*MR. A. C. MORTON (Peterborough):** I rise to a point of Order. I have a question to put which deals with an item prior to that to which the hon. Member for East St. Pancras alludes. Am I precluded from raising it? In the last Parliament it was ruled that, after an item had been passed over, the Committee could not return to it.

**MR. R. G. WEBSTER:** I am very pleased to give way to the hon. Gentleman.

**MR. A. C. MORTON** said, he had simply a question to ask the First Commissioner of Works. Last year the sum of £12,000 was voted for the site and erection of a new post office in Manchester. It appeared that an additional sum of £2,438 was now wanted in respect of the site, and he wished to know whether both sums were to be expended in respect of the site alone. If so, the Committee last year were misled, it having been said that the sum of £12,000 would cover the cost of erection as well as the cost of the site.

**MR. SHAW LEFEVRE:** It is the fact that the sum voted last year and the amount asked for in this Supplementary Estimate are both required for the site.

**MR. A. C. MORTON:** Then last year's statement that it was for buildings and site was incorrect?

**MR. SHAW LEFEVRE:** I think last year it was stated it was for the site alone.

**\*MR. A. C. MORTON:** No; last year's Estimates said it was for a site and the erection of a new office.

**MR. SHAW LEFEVRE:** I will make further inquiry into this matter.

**MR. R. G. WEBSTER:** I find that a particular question I wished to refer to, as regards certain post offices in North London, does not arise in this Vote, and, therefore, I am precluded from bringing the matter before the Committee. I see, however, there is here a Vote for the General Post Office, and I think it would interest the Committee to hear from the First Commissioner of Works when the new works in connection with the General Post Office and Telegraph Department will be completed.

**MR. SHAW LEFEVRE:** I hope that the work will be completed within the present financial year. At any rate, only a small portion is likely to be carried over.

**\*MR. A. C. MORTON:** I am not complaining of the present Government, but of the late Government, in regard to the matter of the new office for Manchester. The Estimate last year distinctly said the sum asked for was for the site and the erection of a new office. The Committee were deceived by being asked to vote money for new buildings and

site when it was to be devoted to the purchase of the site alone. I hope that another time we shall not be so deceived, and that this matter will be thoroughly inquired into.

MR. J. G. LAWSON (York, N.R., Thirsk) said, that as a new Member, he had examined the Supplementary Estimates with the greatest care, and had noticed that the manner in which the sums voted for the erection of post offices was distributed was calculated to lead to confusion. The effect of the course now pursued was to make the Post Office surplus appear larger than it really was. Means ought to be taken to let the public know what was the real surplus of the Post Office. Many hon. Members were anxious to lay before the Postmaster General schemes for distributing the surplus, and the present arrangement of the Votes might result in their being misled. According to the particulars given, it appeared that if a building was bought ready to hand, the charge was made on the Post Office; whereas, if a site was bought and a building erected upon it, the charge went to the Board of Works. He believed that so as to place himself in Order he must move to reduce the Vote by the sum of £18,000, not, of course, for the purpose of preventing the money being expended, but simply to have it placed under the right heading from a book-keeping and business point of view.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That a sum, not exceeding £2,000, be granted for the said Service."—(Mr. John Lawson.)

THE FIRST COMMISSIONER OF WORKS (Mr. SHAW LEFEVRE, Bradford, Central) said, the hon. Member was perfectly right in saying that the Post Office site should be charged to the Post Office Vote, and only the cost of the buildings to the Vote under consideration. The same thing could not be said, however, of the Inland Revenue buildings, and it was thought well that the two items should be brought together in the Votes. In the original Estimate the cost of the Post Office site was charged to the Post Office Vote, and the cost of erecting the buildings to the Building Vote, whilst in the case of the Inland Revenue Buildings the cost both of the site and the erection was charged to the one Vote.

Mr. A. C. Morton

MR. PENROSE FITZGERALD (Cambridge) wished for some information with regard to the establishment of communications between the Post Office and light-ships and lighthouses. The Royal Commission on Electrical Communication with Lighthouses, Post Offices, &c., reported that when communication was established between a light station and a post office which was not constantly open, an alarm bell should be placed in the room of the telegraphists. He thought that sentence would render him in Order in bringing the subject forward on this Vote. If not, he should like to know whether on the Post Office Vote any sum was asked for in regard to the carrying out of the recommendations of the Commission.

THE POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. A. MORLEY, Nottingham, E.) said, there were certainly no items in the Supplementary Estimate which touched the question the hon. Member had raised. There would be a Vote on the Estimates of next year dealing specially with communications with lighthouses and light-ships.

\*SIR M. HICKS-BEACH (Bristol, W.) asked how it was there was no Supplementary Vote on the subject. He had, of course, taken great interest in the Royal Commission, and, indeed, had been responsible for its appointment. The Commission reported in November, recommending expenditure on certain places; and he understood that some of that expenditure had been already incurred, so that it ought to have appeared in the Supplementary Estimates for the present year.

SIR J. FERGUSSON (Manchester, N.E.) said, the case was even stronger than his right hon. Friend had put it. After the Estimates were framed last year, in deference to the wish of the House, as expressed upon a Motion moved by one of the supporters of the then Government, the Government undertook to provide certain communications with lighthouses, and so forth, on shore. The Commission only had reference to lighthouses and lightships; but previously works had been ordered, and to a great extent executed, even before the late Government left Office, so that a Supplementary Estimate was clearly necessary.

\*MR. A. MORLEY said, two questions which were not identical had been raised. There was the question of communication between lighthouses and post offices, and there was also the question of carrying out the recommendations of the Royal Commission dealing mainly with lightships. A Vote of £20,000 had already been passed for the present financial year with respect to the first of these questions. That sum had, he believed, been very nearly expended, but no expenditure would be incurred on any of these services outside the £20,000. The Report of the Royal Commission was being very carefully considered by the Government, and it was intended that Parliament should be asked to sanction certain works recommended by the Royal Commission. No Supplementary Estimate, however, was needed for the purpose.

MR. PENROSE FITZGERALD asked whether all works connecting post offices with lighthouses and lightships were to cease? He thought the House had understood from a statement made by the President of the Local Government Board that the works would go on this year, and that another winter would not be allowed to pass before communications with lighthouses and lightships were provided.

MR. A. MORLEY said, it was intended to continue the work of connecting lightships with post offices.

SIR J. GORST inquired how the Government were going to carry on the work if the money already voted had all been spent, and no more money was taken on a Supplementary Estimate. The Financial Rule was quite distinct: that no expenditure could be entered upon by any Department of the Government, or sanctioned by the Treasury, until a Vote had been passed by the House of Commons. In order to maintain the control of Parliament over the Expenditure of the country, it was necessary that the particular Department of State which was incurring expenditure should at once make application to the Treasury, and obtain Treasury sanction, so that expenditure might be approved by Parliament before the end of the financial year. The statement made by the Postmaster General was really to the effect that the right hon. Gentleman was going to break the law.

\*SIR J. T. HIBBERT said, the right hon. Gentleman who had just sat down had gone a little too far. The Postmaster General had not broken the law, nor did he intend to break the law, because no money had been spent, and it was not intended to spend any money on the service in reference to lightships until next year. £20,000 had been provided for the present year in reference to coast communications, including shore lighthouses, and another Vote would be asked for next year, while a certain sum would be set aside for effecting communications with lightships and island lighthouses. Although the Government did not propose to the full extent to carry out the recommendations of the Commission, the money provided would enable them to do so to a very large extent.

\*MR. JAMES LOWTHER (Kent, Thanet) said, he would put himself in Order by moving to report Progress. In April last a Debate took place on a Motion brought forward by Sir E. Birkbeck, and the House was addressed, amongst others, by the then Postmaster General (Sir J. Fergusson)—

\*THE CHAIRMAN: If the right hon. Gentleman's contention is that there is no money provided for a certain purpose in the Supplementary Estimate, he is not in Order in continuing the conversation. The reason I allowed the Debate to proceed was that I thought it desirable that some information should be given; but I do not think it proper that the right hon. Gentleman should continue the conversation unless he intends to draw attention to something in the Estimates.

\*MR. JAMES LOWTHER said, he proposed to call attention to the way in which the Estimate was prepared. Last year the then Postmaster General named certain objects which he intended to execute at once, and said, "We have already put in hand the surveys of several of these works of the more pressing kind."

MR. DAELZIEL (Kirkcaldy, &c.): Mr. Mellor, I rise to Order. I wish to know whether it is in Order for the right hon. Gentleman to speculate as to what ought to be, or what might have been, in the Supplementary Estimate, when we have it on the authority of the Postmaster General that no provision is



made in the Supplementary Estimate for the matter referred to ?

**THE CHAIRMAN :** It is not in Order to continue the discussion unless the right hon. Gentleman moves to report Progress in order to discuss the mode in which the Estimate is prepared. He has not got to that point yet.

\***MR. JAMES LOWTHER** said, he was coming to that point, although he, of course, quite appreciated the difficulties in which the Chairman found himself placed by the interruptions of persons who were absolutely unacquainted with the practice of Parliament. His point was, that the ex-Postmaster General stated in Parliament a year ago that the Government had already taken certain steps which involved expenditure, and were about to incur further expenditure. He was glad to see that the Prime Minister and the Chancellor of the Exchequer were present, as they would no doubt appreciate a point which new Members naturally failed to grasp. The present Postmaster General said he was not going to spend any money at all during the present financial year. The question, however, was what money had been spent since the 26th of April last, and in what part of the Supplementary Estimate did such expenditure appear ? He could only conclude that owing to the paucity of copies of the Supplementary Estimates, one had failed to find its way into the hands of the Postmaster General, or possibly the right hon. Gentleman had generously given up his copy to some friend—

**SIR J. T. HIBBERT :** I am sorry to interrupt the right hon. Gentleman, but I must rise to Order. If the right hon. Gentleman's observations can be made during the discussion of the Supplementary Estimates, they must be made upon the Telegraphic Vote and not upon the Post Office Vote. This question of telegraphic communication has nothing to do with the Post Office Vote. I must, therefore, venture to say that my right hon. Friend is out of Order.

\***MR. JAMES LOWTHER :** I am not going to argue questions of Order with the right hon. Gentleman, whose arduous duties do not include the laying down of Rules of Order for our guidance.

**THE CHAIRMAN :** It is, of course, impossible to bring forward that matter

on this Vote, as it is not included in the Vote.

\***MR. JAMES LOWTHER** said, his object was to protest against the way in which the Vote was framed.

**MR. D. CRAWFORD (Lanark, N.E.) :** I must ask you, Sir, whether the right hon. Gentleman is in Order ?

**THE CHAIRMAN :** I have already stated my opinion, but the right hon. Gentleman will be in Order if he moves to report Progress for the purpose of distinctly describing the mode in which this Estimate is framed.

\***MR. JAMES LOWTHER** said, it was his intention to do so. These Supplementary Estimates had been framed, according to the Postmaster General's statement, in entire disregard of Parliamentary precedent. All expenditure not provided for in the Estimates of the current year must be submitted to Parliament in the form of Supplementary Estimates. In April last a responsible Minister pledged himself to incur expenditure not contemplated in the current Estimates, and there was no doubt that the money had been spent. This being the case, he wished to know what Vote in the Supplementary Estimates contained this expenditure. He desired to ascertain how much money had been spent, and how much more was to be spent in the same way. If the money had been spent under other heads, of course a deception had been practised upon the Parliament. It was, of course, most improper to expend balances in carrying out works which were not contemplated in the original Estimates ; and if this course had been followed, the Treasury practice had sadly degenerated. In order to raise this highly important point, he moved to report Progress.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Chairman do report Progress, and ask leave to sit again."—(*Mr. James Lowther.*)

\***SIR J. T. HIBBERT** said, the Supplementary Estimates had been prepared according to precedent and practice. No money was being used which had not been voted. The right hon. Gentleman had mixed up two questions. One of these dealt with coast communications, which had been under the charge of the Post Office authorities. For the expenditure on such communications, a Supplementary Estimate for £20,000 was presented to

the House in June last, and the whole of the expenditure that had taken place on coast communications had come out of that £20,000. The other branch of the question related to telegraphic communications with lightships and islands. No money had been spent on any portion of that part of the proposal.

\***MR. JAMES LOWTHER** : A promise was given that it should be spent.

\***SIR J. T. HIBBERT** said, it was not given in his time, and he was not responsible for any promise given by any of his predecessors. As a matter of fact, no money had been spent illegally, and whatever had been done, had been done according to practice.

\***SIR M. HICKS-BEACH** : I would point out that the Government has incurred a heavy responsibility in this matter. The Royal Commission, whose Report is dated December 8th, 1892, recommended that the Goodwin, the North Land Head, the Kentish Knock, and two other light-vessels, should be immediately connected. Although they had the Report of this Commission unanimously signed before them on the 8th December, Her Majesty's Government propose to wait until the 25th March before starting the work which the Commission said should be commenced immediately. Why is this? It is in order to save themselves from submitting a Supplementary Estimate. I really would ask the Postmaster General whether he is willing to incur such responsibility as that? It is obvious that, in the view of the Commission, the delay might involve loss of life during the current year.

\***SIR J. T. HIBBERT** : All I can say is, that the Government have considered the Report, and have made provision for carrying out the recommendations of the Commission. They do not consider it necessary to provide for the expenditure under a Supplemental Estimate. They are defraying the cost of carrying out the recommendations out of the money voted in June last. They are carrying out some of the recommendations of the Commission gradually.

**MR. FITZGERALD** said, that on this important subject he wished to ask a question of the Postmaster General, as the right hon. Gentleman seemed to be labouring under a misconception. He (Mr. FitzGerald) had received two dis-

tinct answers of an opposite nature to each other. The right hon. Gentleman—inadvertently, no doubt, if it was not in accordance with the facts—said the work was going on. The right hon. Gentleman the Secretary to the Treasury said the work was not going on. The matter was one of such vital importance that he wanted to have these conflicting statements put right. He did not care a straw where they got the money, but he wanted the Lifeboat Institution to be able to go on with its work.

\***MR. A. MORLEY** : The hon. Member is under a misapprehension. In what I said I referred to coast communication and the recommendations of the Royal Commission. I said that coast communication was going on, and would go on, during next year; and that next year a substantial Vote would be taken for it. The other recommendations of the Royal Commission are under the careful consideration of the Government. The moment the Report came into my hands—and I do not think it was submitted till January, which is after the date mentioned by the right hon. Gentleman—I communicated with the Treasury and the Board of Trade—who are more especially interested in matters affecting shipping—and the subject was then, and is still being, considered. There will be a Vote in the Estimates for next year which will especially deal with this matter. I said that as to lighthouse communication forming part of the recommendations of the Royal Commission, it is of the same nature as the coast connection work, and some of it is actually now being considered with a view to being carried out without loss of time. But there is no money in this Supplementary Estimate which in any way touches on the subject under discussion.

**MR. BROMLEY-DAVENPORT** thought there were evidences that the Government wished to avoid the discussion of this important matter. If there was no money in the Vote touching upon the discussion there ought to be; and if the right hon. Gentleman would go to a Division he would support him.

\***MR. MUNRO FERGUSON** (Leith, &c.) did not think there was any necessity to go to a Division. As a member of the Royal Commission, he could say that all who had been on it were anxious that

something should be done to carry out the recommendations contained in their Report. The Report dealt with various subjects. One was the subject of coast communication, another fixed lighthouses, and another communication between light-vessels. Some of these communications were very simple to effect, while others were very complicated and difficult. Before the recommendations of the Royal Commission were made the Post Office had done a good deal in regard to coast communication, and more had been accomplished since. Some of the communications could be effected without great cost, and some of them the Departments could not well agree to without full inquiry on their own account. It would be unreasonable, so far as some of the recommendations were concerned, to expect them to be carried out until the Departments had satisfied themselves with regard to them. The Report was only presented in the last days of last year; and though the connections ought to be made as soon as possible, he did not think it reasonable to expect all the work to be carried out within so short a time after the Report was issued. He did not think there need be any great anxiety as to loss of life, because the opinion of several Members of the Commission was, that if the money recommended for communications between lighthouses and lightships could be spent in putting up new lighthouses, loss of life might be saved to a greater extent. Still, the recommendations were highly important, and he hoped something would be done to carry them out.

**MR. JAMES LOWTHER:** I do not wish to press the Motion. I have elicited what I wanted. I wished to ascertain how the money was spent.

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

Question again proposed, "That a sum not exceeding £2,000, be granted for the said Service."

**MR. FITZGERALD** said, the subject was one of great importance, as the circumstances of the wreck of the *Dilsberg* showed. If the lightships—the Kentish Knock, the Long, the Sunk, and Shipwash—had been connected, a great deal of the loss of life which unfortunately happened would have been prevented.

*Mr. Munro Ferguson*

**COLONEL BRIDGEMAN** (Bolton) said, the amounts for post office buildings and post office sites were in different Votes; and when attention was called to the fact, it was said that the whole expenditure was given in the Post Office Report. He wished to know why the Post Office Report differed from the Estimates.

**MR. SHAW LEFEVRE:** I did not say that the Post Office Report—I said that the Return issued last year shows the expenditure in the Post Office under all the heads. It shows what is the real surplus after taking into account all the receipts.

**COLONEL BRIDGEMAN:** Why should not the Votes for buildings and sites be put together?

**\*MR. SHAW LEFEVRE:** The usual course has been to put only the sites under this Vote.

**\*MR. MORTON** (Peterborough) said, they ought to have an undertaking from the Government that in future these Votes be taken together, so as to save time and trouble and two discussions. The Committee should be able to see the total amount required for the buildings.

**\*MR. SHAW LEFEVRE:** That will be considered.

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

Original Question put, and agreed to.

2. £12,000, Supplementary, Public Buildings, Great Britain.

**MR. BARTLEY** said, so far as he could understand, there had been no Vote at all for this service—the National Portrait Gallery Building. He should like to know the exact position in which the institution stood. It seemed that owing to the liberality of some unknown person funds were provided for erecting this gallery, but at the same time Parliament was asked to vote £16,000 for that which was really part and parcel of the building. He had always held that the site selected for the gallery was a bad one. He did not believe in putting several of these public institutions together. London was a large place and he had always thought that it would be an advantage to London to have the various institutions for the promotion of culture and the study of art and the improvement of the people placed in different localities so as to form centres for radiating knowledge and culture.

amongst the people. Would the First Commissioner of Works give them some details as to this building? Did he understand that the gallery was to become the absolute property of the nation?—for there was some idea that this £16,000 was to be a contribution towards the cost of the building, which was not to become public property.

\*MR. SHAW LEFEVRE: The hon. Gentleman is quite justified in asking for information on this Vote, which is a new item. It is one for which my predecessor is responsible, but I am very glad to be able to defend it. The House, I think, will agree that it is justifiable, and that if the Government had not agreed to contribute this money, it would have been acting unfairly towards the gentleman referred to as the unknown donor, but who is well-known as Mr. Alexander. This gentleman has very munificently offered to build the National Portrait Gallery. Mr. Alexander, two years ago, offered to contribute a large sum of money (£60,000) towards the erection of a National Portrait Gallery on two conditions: one being that the Government should provide the site, and the other being that he should employ his own architect. It was decided that the building should be erected on the site behind the National Gallery. I believe that Mr. Alexander himself wished for that site, but, for my own part, I agree with the hon. Gentleman opposite on that subject. The question, however, of site has been determined, and I do not think it worth while to enter upon a discussion as to whether or not the late Government were right in arranging with Mr. Alexander for that particular site. The site having been settled, Mr. Alexander put the matter into the hands of his architect, Mr. Christian, who prepared plans. He had not proceeded very far, however, when it was ascertained that the £60,000 would not cover the cost of the building, but that £96,000 would be needed. Mr. Alexander said he could not undertake to furnish the whole of that amount, but he very generously said that he would contribute £80,000—which was the estimated cost of erecting that portion of the building mainly to be used as a National Portrait Gallery—but he expressed the opinion that the Government might fairly contribute £16,000, which

would be the cost of the erection of that portion of the building necessary to connect the new Gallery with the National Gallery, and of constructing a new *façade* for the National Gallery. The late Government took that view of the matter, and most reasonably and properly undertook to provide the remaining £16,000. The late Government came to a most proper conclusion in the matter, and I do not see how they could have arrived at any other without being open to the imputation of being shabby and mean to Mr. Alexander. The Government have the assurance of the architect that there can be no possibility of the expenditure being more than £96,000, and that the Government can by no possibility be called upon to contribute more than £16,000. When the building is complete it will be put into the hands of the Government, and become the property of the nation, and we shall then be in a position to thank Mr. Alexander for the splendid donation he has made to the country, and we shall have a National Portrait Gallery most suitable for the purpose, and a very handsome addition to the public buildings of the Metropolis.

\*MR. BARTLEY said, he was grateful to the right hon. Gentleman for his explicit statement. The right hon. Gentleman must not think that he (Mr. Bartley) was in any way antagonistic to the Vote; but inasmuch as it was a new one, and the public were not familiar with the circumstances, he had thought it desirable to elicit an explanation. The general public, he thought, would be glad that the discussion had been raised.

\*SIR J. GOLDSMID thought that thanks ought to be tendered both to Mr. Alexander and the late Government for their action in the matter. It was most desirable that the collection of portraits should be properly housed, the subject being one which had been urged on various Governments for years past. The Government would have been shabby, indeed, to have refused to ask the House to vote £16,000, or even £20,000, if necessary, for an important building of this character.

MR. FREEMAN-MITFORD said, that everyone who had heard the statement of the right hon. Gentleman the First Commissioner of Works must have listened to it with great satisfaction. It

would, doubtless, add to that satisfaction if the right hon. Gentleman could tell them when they might expect the new gallery to be opened.

**MR. SHAW LEFEVRE:** It will be completed in about the middle of the next financial year — perhaps rather earlier.

**\*MR. PLUNKET (Dublin University):** As I was in Office at the time these negotiations took place with Mr. Alexander, I rise to add my voice to what has been said by the right hon. Gentleman by stating that nothing could exceed the generosity and the liberality with which Mr. Alexander has behaved to the Government and to the nation all through these transactions.

Vote agreed to.

3. £2,200, Supplementary, Harbours in the United Kingdom, and Lighthouses Abroad under the Board of Trade.

**\*SIR M. HICKS-BEACH:** There are one or two points in this Supplementary Estimate as to which I am anxious to ask a few questions of the President of the Board of Trade. The first item in the Estimate is a re-Vote in respect of certain works at Holyhead Harbour. Some alterations are being effected at the place where the steamers of the Royal Dublin Mail Company embark and disembark their passengers, and the pier is being strengthened to resist the western gales. Some of the work was completed two years ago, and three-fourths of the cost was taken in the financial year 1891-92, and it was estimated that the remaining quarter would be required in the current year. The re-Vote is due to the fact that not so much of the work was done in 1891-92 as was anticipated. But what I want to direct attention to is this: that the re-Vote appears in the Estimate, less certain savings, under several sub-heads in the Estimate for the current year. Now these sub-heads referred to certain very necessary expenditure indeed. There is, for instance, an item for the repair of Dover Harbour, another for works at Spurn Point—an important bulwark against the sea at the mouth of the Humber, which has been under the charge of the Board of Trade for some years. Spurn Point got into a dangerous condition, and Sir John Cooke prepared an estimate as to the cost of the neces-

sary repairs, and he reported that it would be £1,300. At the time it was considered absolutely necessary that this work should be done, and done at once, for the security of that part of the coast. There must have been a considerable saving under that Estimate of £1,300, which has been devoted towards part of this Holyhead Harbour, because the total saving is £1,100. Then the other item upon which a saving has been effected is also for necessary work—namely, the erection of lighthouse keepers' dwellings in the Falkland Islands. Has the right hon. Gentleman got that £1,100 consistently with the proper completion of these works? I come now to the second item, an increased charge of £1,800—an unforeseen increased expenditure on the alteration and repairs to a new steam tender. For some years past some dozen lighthouses at the Bahamas had been served by a sailing tender, which had become gradually unfit for the work, and it was suggested to me that she should be replaced by a new tender which would cost something like £26,000. I went carefully into the matter, in which I had the assistance of the naval advisers to the Board of Trade. I preferred to purchase a gunboat from the Admiralty, which was obtained for a comparatively small sum. I was informed that £10,000 would be ample to place her in a condition to do the necessary work, and a Vote for this amount was taken. I see, however, there is an increase on that amount of £1,800. I should like to ask why that increase has been found necessary, if this is the last Vote on the matter, and if the work has been done and the steamer put on her station in the Bahamas?

**MR. MUNDELLA:** I have to say at the outset that many of these matters have not come under my notice at the Board of Trade, and none of them have been dealt with under my administration, but I will inquire into them. As to the saving which the right hon. Gentleman has alluded to, I have to say that a sum is taken in the Estimates every new year for the construction of a new groin at Spurn Point. This year the engineers reported that there was no necessity for a new groin, as the old groin stood well. Consequently, the saving was applied to the completion of the works at Holyhead. There had also been a small saving on the works in the Falkland

Islands. In respect of the lightship for the Bahamas, it is true, as the right hon. Gentleman says, that a gunboat was purchased, and that it was estimated that for a sum of £10,000 she could be placed in proper condition for the work in which she was to be engaged; but, as a matter of fact, it cost £11,800 to complete her. I am sure the whole thing was done with great care and economy, and that there was no neglect of work.

**SIR M. HICKS-BEACH:** I did not impute discredit to the right hon. Gentleman or his subordinates at all. What I want to be clear about is that any necessary work at Spurn Point has been done, and that any saving under that head of the Estimate for this current year has been incurred by the advice of the engineer, and not by any neglect of necessary work.

**MR. MUNDELLA:** That is exactly what I stated.

**COMMANDER BETHELL** (York, E.R., Holderness) was glad to hear that the saving that had been effected in regard to Spurn Point had not been at the expense of any necessary work. In connection with this matter, he pointed out that for a great number of years the Board of Trade had interfered with the people on the coast, and had prevented them taking gravel for a long distance from Spurn Point, and if there had been a saving in the construction of this groin he suggested that greater liberty should be given to the people along the coast in respect to this important question of gravel.

**\*SIR M. HICKS-BEACH** said, this question of gravel was pressed under his consideration when he was at the Board of Trade, and he hoped the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Mundella) would not prove amenable to the blandishments of the hon. Gentleman who had last spoken; for if that hon. Member's constituents removed this gravel from Spurn Point, a great national mischief might be done.

**\*MR. A. C. MORTON** said, the real Vote was for £1,500 for works at Holyhead. They were told there were savings under certain sub-heads which were for proposed works at Dover and other places. The right hon. Gentleman had mentioned that certain of these works might not have been necessary. He objected to the way these Votes were presented. The Government

ought not to ask for £400, which was not the proper sum, but for £1,500, which they were really going to spend. With regard to the next item of £1,800, the increased expenditure for this new steam tender, he said the original Estimate was for £10,000, whereas it seemed that this amount had been exceeded by £1,800. Surely their highly-paid officers could estimate nearer the actual amount than this.

Vote agreed to.

#### 4. Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That a Supplementary sum, not exceeding £34,786, be granted to Her Majesty, to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March 1893, for Payments under the Light Railways Act of 1889."

**MR. BROMLEY - DAVENPORT** wished to know if this was the last sum they should be called upon to pay in connection with these Irish railways?

**MR. MACARTNEY** (Antrim, S.) desired to know whether this sum was distributed over all the light railways under the Act; how much was going to be given to the railways for which contracts had been carried out by existing Railway Companies; and how much to the railways carried out by contracts direct from the Government? He also wished to know how many of these railways had fallen through, and the date of the probable completion of the lines? If the work had been stopped on any of the lines, he should like to know the reason of the stoppage, and whether the Secretary to the Treasury could assure the Committee that the Government were making such arrangements as to ensure that the work would be resumed as soon as possible in any case in which it had been stopped?

**MR. JOHN DILLON** (Mayo, E.) said, he would like to know from the Secretary to the Treasury whether he could now inform the Committee on what date the Waterford and Limerick Railway Company had been bound to commence the work in connection with the Collooney and Claremorris Light Railway? He was informed that a great deal of distress existed in that district, that there was great anxiety owing to the want of employment, and that it was a matter of great importance that the works should commence immediately. The work would be of infinitely greater

value to the people now than it would be two months hence, when they would be employed on their Spring work. There had been a very great and unnecessary delay in the starting of the works.

\*SIR THOMAS LEA (Londonderry, S.) said, there was also much distress in Donegal in consequence of the bad seasons. He should like to know whether this money had been expended, and, if not, whether it would be expended in those distressed districts in the West? Did this complete the whole sum of £600,000 voted by Parliament; and if it did, and if certain railways were yet uncompleted, what was to become of them? He knew some years ago of one railway in Donegal which could not be completed for want of money, and the works went to wreck and ruin during the time negotiations were proceeding for obtaining the requisite money to complete the railway.

\*MR. T. W. RUSSELL said, there was an undertaking when this Light Railways Act was passed that the line from Westport to Mulrany should be extended to Achill Sound. He should like to know whether that undertaking had been carried out.

THE MARQUESS OF CARMARTHEN (Lambeth, Brixton) inquired in regard to the railway from Headford to Kenmare, and asked whether the full complement of workmen were being employed on that undertaking at present. There was great distress in that neighbourhood owing to the bad times. He hoped the Government would at once put a full complement of labourers at work rather than wait until they would be engaged in agricultural pursuits.

MR. ARTHUR O'CONNOR (Donegal, E.) said, he wished to draw attention to a line in the County Donegal, which had been in hands for a very long time—that which ran from Stranorlar to Glenties. That line ought to have been completed as far back as last November. It was not, however, half completed, and it was very difficult to ascertain when it would be in working order. He had had some correspondence with the Board of Works with regard to it, and he had been assured that the contractors who appeared to have an interest rather hostile to the completion of the railway were now making every effort to finish the work, and that 300 men had been put

to work. However, the last information he had was that, so far from employing men in any reasonable number or on reasonable terms, the contractors in question were only offering 2½d. an hour to men employed on the Glenties end of the line, and there was no prospect, of course, of their getting anything like adequate labour on such terms to complete the work within a reasonable time. He wished to know from the Secretary to the Treasury whether he would undertake to compel the contractors to execute the contract that they had undertaken, and whether he would enforce the penalties under which they stood if the work was not completed during the period up to which they got their last extension?

\*SIR J. T. HIBBERT: Before I say anything with respect to the particular railways that have been referred to, I think it would be well if I said a word or two as to the amount of money spent and likely to be required for the completion of the various works. The total amount asked for to-day is £34,786. The necessity of that Vote arises in thisway: In December, 1891, when the Estimates were being prepared for the year 1892-1893, it was thought that £510,000 would have been spent by March, 1892, and, therefore, the then Government proposed to ask Parliament to vote £90,000. It turned out that the £510,000 was not spent up to the end of March, 1892, and that the real sum spent was only about £475,000, leaving a sum of about £125,000, which was required to make up the £600,000 provided by Parliament. Parliament having provided £90,000 in the original Estimate has now to provide £34,876. The present Government adopted the plans of their predecessors, and this Supplementary Vote is to complete the expenditure up to the £600,000. I will just state shortly the position in which the fund is. The amount for which we are liable to complete the light railways is estimated at £1,145,000. Against this sum there is the amount provided under the Act of Parliament of £600,000. Then there is the power of raising money upon loan, and that has been carried out to a certain extent, and will be carried out still further. The amount available under the present powers for loans amounts to £376,000. That makes a

total sum available of £976,000, leaving a sum to be made up (for which we shall have to ask powers from Parliament) of £169,000. We shall take steps to bring forward a Bill to provide for something like that sum, or perhaps a little over, so as to raise the necessary amount. I will now state the position in which the railways stand. There are 12 railways, and I will give the particulars of each. There is the Donegal and Killybegs line. The probable date of the completion of that line is June, 1893, but an Extension Order has been granted until the 24th of October, 1893. There is the Stranorlar and Glenties line, for the completion of which, by an Order in Council, the time has been extended to December 31st, 1894. Then there is the Achill extension, for which there is no Order in Council, but it is hoped that some satisfactory arrangement will be made with the Midland Railway Company in regard to that extension. The time for the completion of the Galway and Clifden line was extended by Order in Council to the 31st December, 1894. The probable date of the completion of the Headford and Kenmare line was fixed as July, 1893, but the time has been extended by Order in Council to the 17th September, 1893. The probable date of the completion of the Killorglin and Valentia line was also July, and that has been extended to the same date. The time fixed by Order in Council for the completion of the Baltimore extension was December last. The Bantry extension is now open for traffic. The Downpatrick and Ardglass Railway was opened for traffic on the 31st December, 1892; but in reference to the Ardglass line, I am sorry to say there is a dispute regarding a tramway from the railway to the pier, but it is expected that that dispute will be settled in a very short time. The time fixed by Order in Council for the completion of the Collooney and Claremorris Railway is the 31st December, 1894, and for the Westport and Mulranny line December, 1893. The Ballina and Killala Railway has been already opened for traffic. The amount required for expenditure upon these lines up to the 31st January this year was £706,110. The amount required from that period up to the end of March is estimated at £104,853, and next year a sum estimated at £271,000 will be re-

quired. On the respective railways, with regard to which questions have been asked, I should explain that the Glenties line has not been pushed forward in the way that it ought to have been pushed forward, but we have taken steps to bring pressure to bear on the contractors. I may say, indeed, that we have brought considerable pressure to bear on the parties, for I understand the line has been very much delayed.

Mr. CREAN (Queen's Co., Ossory) : What time must the works be completed under the contract ?

\*SIR J. T. HIBBERT : The Order in Council fixes the end of 1894. With regard to the Collooney and Claremorris line, the Waterford and Limerick Railway Company have had a dispute with a contractor, and I am sorry to say the matter is not yet settled. It is the intention of the Irish Board of Works, if it is not soon settled, to take steps to bring the subject before a Court of Law, and apply for a *mandamus* to compel the Company to proceed.

Mr. JACKSON (Leeds, N.) : What is the dispute about ?

SIR J. T. HIBBERT : I am unable to state with any detail what the particulars of the dispute are.

Mr. DILLON : Can the right hon. Gentleman give the date by which the railway must be finished ?

\*SIR J. T. HIBBERT : The date fixed by Order in Council is the 31st December, 1894; and with regard to the Galway and Clifden line, I may state that the Midland Great Western Railway Company have made arrangements with a new contractor. I have a telegram here which states that the Midland Company took possession of the Galway and Clifden line from the old contractor in July, 1892; that the new contractor, since appointed, has been at work for some time, and that the works are progressing satisfactorily. With regard to the extension of the Westport and Mulranny line to Achill, I have not obtained the details of the negotiations with the Midland Railway Company, but the Irish Board of Works are very hopeful that satisfactory arrangements will be made for the completion and working of the line.

Mr. JOHN G. LAWSON (York, N.R., Thirsk) : Can the right hon. Gentleman tell us how many lines of light



railway have been opened in Ireland during the last six months?

SIR J. T. HIBBERT: I cannot say how many lines have been opened during the last six months, but I can state the number of miles that have been completed.

MR. JOHN G. LAWSON: A Paper has been circulated amongst the Members of the House during the last two or three days with the object of showing that there have been 22 miles of railway opened in Ireland during the last six months. I presume that some of these have been opened through private enterprise, and the question which I ask is, how many miles have been opened under the Light Railways Act?

SIR J. T. HIBBERT: I am not able to answer that question; but I can tell the hon. Member the condition of the various lines at present. Donegal and Killybegs: Length, 19 miles; completed up to formation level,  $18\frac{1}{2}$  miles; permanent way laid, 15 miles. Glenties: Length,  $24\frac{1}{2}$  miles; up to formation level, 17 miles; permanent way laid, none. Ballina and Killala: Length, 8 miles; up to formation level, 8 miles; permanent way laid, 8 miles. Westport and Mulranny: Length, 18 miles; up to formation level, 16 miles; permanent way laid,  $13\frac{1}{2}$  miles. Collooney and Claremorris: Length,  $47\frac{1}{2}$  miles; up to formation level, none; permanent way laid, none. Galway and Clifden: Length,  $49\frac{1}{2}$  miles; up to formation level,  $30\frac{1}{2}$  miles; permanent way laid, 13 miles. Killorglin and Valentia: Length,  $26\frac{1}{2}$  miles; up to formation level,  $26\frac{1}{2}$  miles; permanent way laid, 12 miles. Headford and Kenmare: Length,  $19\frac{1}{2}$  miles; up to formation level,  $19\frac{1}{2}$  miles; permanent way laid, 7 miles. Baltimore and Skibbereen: length,  $7\frac{1}{2}$  miles; up to formation level,  $7\frac{1}{2}$  miles; permanent way laid,  $7\frac{1}{2}$  miles. Bantry extension: Length,  $1\frac{1}{2}$  miles; up to formation level,  $1\frac{1}{2}$  miles; permanent way laid,  $1\frac{1}{2}$  miles. Downpatrick and Ardglass: Length, 8 miles; up to formation level, 8 miles; permanent way laid, 8 miles. Achill extension: Up to formation level,  $8\frac{1}{2}$  miles; permanent way laid, 8 miles.

\*MR. T. W. RUSSELL said, they could only arrive at the conclusion that matters in connection with the light railways were in an unsatisfactory state. The Act

was passed in 1889, and in addition to the benefits that the lines were to confer upon Ireland there was one motive which influenced the House very materially in passing the Act—namely, that whilst it would confer benefits upon Ireland from the commercial standpoint, it would also help the people of the districts who were then in a state of distress. His hon. Friend asked the Secretary to the Treasury how many lines had been opened during the last six months. The Secretary to the Treasury told them that the Bantry extension line had been opened. That was about a mile long, and, therefore, it did not count very much. It was simply from the pier at Bantry up to the town. Then the Baltimore extension line had been opened, and everybody must be rejoiced at the fact, because there, at all events, a real work of utility had been done. But that line was only seven miles long, and, therefore, a great deal had not been accomplished in the four years. The Ardglass and Downpatrick line had been done, and that was three or four miles long.

SIR J. T. HIBBERT: Eight miles.

\*MR. T. W. RUSSELL said, he had some scruple in mentioning that line, because he really did not know how a light railway came to be constructed in the County Down. At all events, it came to this: that something like 15 miles of light railway had been completed in four years, and this was the work that was to employ the poor people who were in distress. What was the cause of this? It was not the fault of Parliament, because Parliament voted the money. They were told now that the Railway Companies were in collision with the contractors, and that, in fact, old contractors had to be dismissed and new contractors appointed.

\*SIR J. T. HIBBERT: I only know of one case of that kind—the case of the Galway and Clifden Railway.

\*MR. T. W. RUSSELL said, there was also the case of the Waterford and Lime-  
rick Railway with regard to the Collooney and Claremorris line. That made two cases. He wished to ask whether the Treasury and the Board of Works ought to stand this delay? With regard to the Westport and Mulranny Railway, they were told that it was hoped that the Midland Railway Company would do it. What had the Midland Railway Company

got to do with it? He thought the whole thing was in a sad state, and that the Treasury ought to see to it, especially in times like the present, when there was a great deal of distress.

\***VISCOUNT WOLMER** (Edinburgh, W.) said, the Secretary to the Treasury had used the phrase "extension has been given by an order in Council" in connection with most of the light railways. What did that mean? It meant that the contractors had neglected to fulfil their contracts, and that they went to the Board of Works to ask leave to depart from their contract and the conditions they had agreed to by having an extension of time to complete the work, and all this while there was said to be distress in the western districts of Ireland, and men willing to work going about idle. He thought the Committee had a right to ask whether this large extension of time would not have the effect of entailing more cost upon the taxpayers. They had a right to know what the extra cost involved in these extensions was?

**SIR J. T. HIBBERT** : None.

\***VISCOUNT WOLMER** said, he could not help carrying his mind back to the Debates when this question of constructing light railways in Ireland was before the House. He remembered passages from a speech either of the late or of the present Chief Secretary in which he stated that railway works in Ireland had been left uncompleted, leading from nowhere to nowhere, and that well-made roads traversed great regions of bog without any beginning and without any end. He felt sure that all parties in the House were anxious that no such disgraceful state of things should prevail in the present scheme of light railways in Ireland. Had the Government yet considered seriously how these railways were to be finished, and how the recurrence to the old abuses in the construction of railways in Ireland were to be avoided?

**MR. FLYNN** (Cork, N.) said, he hoped the Committee would appreciate the benevolent views of the hon. Gentleman who took such a deep interest in the Light Railways of Ireland. He hoped they would appreciate how this subject had become intensified since the Government came into power. He congratulated the people of Ireland on the great interest that was taken in the matter by the

Members for Tottenham Court and other places.

\***THE CHAIRMAN** : I think the hon. Member is out of Order.

**MR. FLYNN** said, of course, he would withdraw, but he hoped they would appreciate the intense interest taken in the matter by these gentlemen, who only wanted to occupy the time of the Committee, and who could throw as much light upon the Vote before the Committee, as the noble Lord who had just sat down. The Irish Members very well understood the position with regard to these railways. The people of the localities who were interested in the completion of these railways were the best informants of the House, and he would beg hon. Gentlemen and right hon. Gentlemen, who were Scotchmen and Englishmen, to lay the flattering unction to their souls that they knew nothing about the case, and that they should allow the Irish Members to go on with their own business.

**MR. A. J. BALFOUR** (Manchester, E.) : The hon. Gentleman who has just sat down said this was an Irish question on which English Members had no right to express an opinion. I may, perhaps, be allowed to point out that if Ireland gets the railways England pays for them.

**MR. SEXTON** (Kerry, N.) : Ireland pays every penny of it.

**MR. A. J. BALFOUR** : The Member for North Kerry, who usually poses as a financial authority in this House—well, I will not say poses, he is a financial authority—tells us that Ireland pays every penny of it. Perhaps the hon. Gentleman will get up and substantiate that statement, and if he does he will astonish every other financial authority in the House, and no one, I am sure, more than the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary to the Treasury.

**MR. SEXTON** : I have not the slightest objection to state in a sentence how Ireland pays every penny of it. Ireland contributes every year to the Imperial Treasury £8,000,000 sterling, and after all the charges and costs of the Civil Service of Ireland, and all the various grants are paid, there are £2,000,000 left to the Imperial Exchequer.

**MR. A. J. BALFOUR :** If the hon. Member bases his strange contention on the view of the general financial relations between England and Ireland, I should not be in Order in discussing it at the present moment. But I apprehend there is a measure before the House under which that question can, and will, and must, be raised in detail. The only other observation I have to make on that point is that a Committee for investigating this very question was offered to the hon. Gentleman by the late Government, and the hon. Gentleman, by means perfectly understood by this House, put off from week to week and from month to month the appointment of that Committee, so that we are now possessed of no definite information on the subject.

**MR. SEXTON :** I wish to say on that matter that for two years the late Government refused to put down the Motion for the Committee except under circumstances that would exclude the appointment of the Committee.

**MR. A. J. BALFOUR :** If the hon. Gentleman means that the late Government did not, to the detriment of other business, give a day for the purpose of having a controversy on the question, he is quite right. Whether that was a legitimate or an illegitimate action on the part of the late Government I will not now discuss ; but let me point out that it is precisely that same course which the Leader of the House proposes to adopt in regard to the Committee to inquire into the causes of agricultural distress. But whether Ireland gains or does not gain by the general financial relations between the two countries, every sixpence connected with these eight railways has been paid out of the Imperial Exchequer for purely Irish purposes, and English Members have, therefore, as good a right as Irish Members to discuss the matter, and to criticise the progress that has been made in the works. I am sure the Government are doing their best to bring the railways to a completion. They have great difficulties to contend with, as we had great difficulties to contend with, in the matter of the contracts with the Railway Companies. If my noble Friend (Viscount Wolmer) thinks it is in the power of the Executive Government to take care that the contractors and the Railway Companies shall come to terms

and deal with each other in the spirit of Christian charity, I am sure he will find, if he puts them face to face, that that operation is not so easy. I do not wish to press the Government to give me any information upon negotiations now in progress, but I should like to know, with regard to the Collooney and Claremorris line, whether they can hold out substantial hopes that that railway will be finished at the time mentioned. It is one of the longest of the lines—nearly 50 miles in extent—and we have been told by the Secretary to the Treasury that not a single yard of formation level, or a single yard of permanent way, has been laid. It passes through an extremely populous and an extremely poor district ; and I believe there is no part of Ireland where a light railway is likely to do immediate good and to result in the permanent improvement of the condition of the people. I hope that the difficulties will be soon got over, and that the somewhat discreditable condition of affairs—I do not mean discreditable to the Government—will be soon brought to an end.

**SIR J. T. HIBBERT :** Hon. Members seem to think they have some cause of complaint against the Government for not accomplishing more than they have accomplished in regard to these light railways ; but they must remember that we have only been in Office six months, and that the Light Railways Act was passed a couple of years ago. So far as I am concerned, I can only promise that whatever can be done in the way of pressure by the Irish Board of Works will be done to bring these railways to a completion. I am anxious that these works, which have been inaugurated by my right hon. Friend the Member for Leeds (Mr. Jackson), should be completed in a way which is satisfactory to him and to the country generally ; and I hope that before very long we will be able to see these light railways, which are being carried out under great difficulties, opening up the backward districts of Ireland and doing great good to the country.

**\*MR. JACKSON :** I was surprised to hear the remarks which fell from the hon. Member for Cork (Mr. Flynn) in reference to the action of Members of the Unionist Party on this Vote ; for, whatever may be said of us, this scheme of light railways in Ireland is a thing that

should be placed to our credit. Reference has been made to the increased Vote that is required by the House, and to the probability that a Bill will be brought in in order to increase the sum placed at the disposal of the Treasury. I think I am correctly describing the matter when I say that, although a Bill may be necessary to place at the disposal of the Treasury an additional sum, that does not necessarily mean there is any increase in the expenditure. The position is this: Parliament placed at the disposal of the Irish Government for this purpose of railways £600,000. There was a balance of a sum which Parliament had placed at their disposal under the Light Railways Act of 1883, which was also available. Under the Act of 1883 there were certain Treasury guarantees given to certain railways made in aid of the Baronial guarantee. We thought we were well within the spirit of the Act, if we were not quite within the letter of the Act, in treating as a balance available to us the balance that had not been called upon under the Act of 1883. Having considered this question, the Law Officers decided that in order to be technically right provision must be made for the largest sum that might ever be called upon under the Baronial guarantees; and although it may be necessary to take the full sum of the Baronial guarantees to give the additional power to the Treasury, it does not mean that there has been any excess of expenditure over the original Estimate. I was somewhat criticised by the present Chief Secretary, when he was in Opposition, for having made what he described as unbusinesslike arrangements with regard to these railways. I venture to say the right hon. Gentleman will not now rise in his place, and with his further experience on the subject question the arrangement that was made by the Government with regard to these railways. The arrangements made with the Railway Companies relieved the Government of all responsibility as regarded the construction and the working of these railways when constructed, and assured to the different localities the perfect maintenance in good order of these railways. The management also enabled the Government to rely with certainty upon their Estimates, and when it is borne in mind the difficult circum-

stances under which the arrangements were made, all who look carefully into the matter must admit them to be satisfactory. When my right hon. Friend (Mr. Balfour), who was then Chief Secretary, was advised at the end of the Session of 1890 of the possibility of distress arising in Ireland, he came to me and asked me what could be done in the matter of pushing forward these works in case of need, so that they could be utilised in aid of the relief of the distress. I was sent over to Ireland to make the best arrangements I could. My right hon. Friend had decided, and wisely decided as experience proved, that the best plan was to try and make arrangements with the existing Railway Companies, both as regards the construction and the working of the extension lines. The position was not a very easy one. It was known perfectly well that the Government were anxious to try and make these works available for any possible distress that might arise in the winter. I spent six weeks in Ireland, and I did my best to make a good bargain. I came back from Ireland, having made arrangements with the Railway Companies which involved the expenditure of £1,000,000 of money, and I say now, with the further experience that has been obtained, no one can question the wisdom of the arrangements made at that time. If you take the case of Achill, it will illustrate the difficulties. I had made an arrangement as regards Westport and Mulranny, before my right hon. Friend had his tour through Ireland. He went to Achill, and saw what he considered to be a prospect of great distress. He then went to Collooney and Claremorris, and saw there also prospects of distress. The people pleaded to him; he yielded to their entreaties, and came to me and said, "I have decided that this line must also be made." I pointed out to my right hon. Friend that there was no power to make this line; there was no Act of Parliament and no compulsory power to take the land. My right hon. Friend said, "Power or no power, railways must be made, and therefore you must find a way out of this difficulty." The only reply I could make was, that if it was insisted on these lines being made, we must make our bargains before we began to spend the money, and the only way I could suggest was that my

right hon. Friend should find some solicitor who could go as it were with pen and ink and cheque book in his pocket, get the aid of the people in the district who were interested in the question, and by that means make provisional agreement for the acquisition of the land through the entire length. That course was pursued; lands were so obtained, and the works were immediately commenced. I was in great anxiety in regard to these two lines, because we had not been able to make arrangements with the existing Railway Companies for their construction or their working when completed. In the case of the Collooney and Claremorris Railway, let me say it is a curious fact, that whilst in 1891 we were told that it was a most urgent necessity that these works should be gone on with; whilst there were frequent questions in this House, and frequent applications from people in the district urging the construction of this line in order to provide work for the people in the district, we never hear a word now, although the works are standing still.

MR. DILLON: I beg the right hon. Gentleman's pardon. I have spoken of the matter to-day, and I shall certainly speak again very soon if these works are not completed.

MR. JACKSON: I make no complaint of the hon. Member. I thought he was exercising great restraint indeed.

MR. DILLON: So I have been.

MR. JACKSON: I presume that, having exercised that restraint and patience, he has not had the pressure put upon him by his constituents that he had on former occasions.

MR. DILLON: On the contrary, I am sorry to say there has been considerable pressure.

\*MR. JACKSON: All I can say is that the hon. Member deals very differently with the existing Government to what he did with the late Government. Why, Sir, in former times we used to think that the hon. Member put pressure on his constituents in order to embarrass the Government. But these were the only two lines about which I had anxiety. I was fortunate enough before leaving Office to see the contract finally made as regards the Collooney and Claremorris line. I should have been glad if the arrangement had

been concluded with the Midland Railway Company for taking over the Achill line, because that would have completed the whole of the work in connection with these railways. I do not want to put undue pressure on the Financial Secretary to the Treasury, but I do hope he will do all he can to insure that the works in connection with the line from Collooney to Claremorris shall be put into active operation. They have now been standing for nearly 12 months. I hope no difficulties will be allowed to stand in the way, because I believe this line will not only prove to be a great advantage to the district through which it passes, but there is a possibility that it will also prove a profitable line. With regard to the difficulties that have been spoken of in dealing with the contractors of other lines, I should like to say this word in favour of the Midland Company: I know they have had great difficulties in connection with the Galway and Clifden line. The contractor who first undertook the work of constructing the whole of the line failed. This was no fault of the Railway Company, and they were bound then to look after completing the line in some other form. They are responsible for its construction; they can receive no benefit from the line until it is completed; and, therefore, there is the best of all guarantees, that is to say, their own self-interest, that the line will be completed as soon as it can be completed. From what I know of Sir Ralph Cusack, I am quite sure that whatever he undertakes to do he may be relied upon to carry it out and as early as possible. As regards the Westport and Mulranny line, I understand that it is in a good state of progress, and I hope the Midland Railway will take over the Achill line. It will be a great advantage, as it takes the line up to the verge of the population. It will also prove not only to be a relief as regards Achill itself, but I believe it is within easy reach of Belmullet, because practically within two hours' sail from Belmullet to Achill Sound, and I shall be very much surprised if instead of the traffic from the district of Belmullet travelling 40 miles practically across the bog to Ballina, it will not come down through Blacksod Bay to Achill Sound and take the railway there. I am glad to

hear that several of these lines have been completed. I think that all that is necessary for me to say with regard to the Stranorlar and Glenties line is that I understand it is now making progress. There was a little difficulty with the contractor, but that has now been overcome. The Killybegs line is nearly completed, and is to be finished by June, 1893. I wish to point out that any gratitude that the Irish people may feel for the carrying out and construction of these railways is due to my right hon. Friend (Mr. Balfour), who alone is responsible for the initiation of this great work.

MR. T. M. HEALY (Louth, N.) expressed the opinion that the Midland Railway Company and the Great Eastern Railway Company would bitterly regret the bargains they had made with the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Jackson), which would turn out to be most unfair to themselves and their shareholders.

MR. JESSE COLLINGS (Birmingham, Bordesley) said it would conduce to facilitate the business of the House if hon. Members adopted a less offensive tone. The hon. Member for North Cork (Mr. Flynn) had used some offensive expressions, and had followed what seemed to be a policy of shouting down and preventing free expression of speech by the Members of the Unionist Party. This hon. Member represented as new-born zeal the favourable consideration on the part of Unionist Members, not only of Irish railways, but of every effort to assist the want of labour and the necessity and distress in Ireland. Hon. Members who recollected the origin of these light railways would remember that the opposition to them came from hon. Members opposite, and that the very Members whom the Member for North Cork had taken to task in such offensive terms were the very Members who were most anxious to press them forward, and who did press them forward, in spite of those who, one would think, ought to have been the first to forward any measure for the alleviation of distress. Even the hon. Member for Louth (Mr. Timothy Healy) voted against these light railways in Ireland, and he (Mr. Collings) remembered the anxiety and perseverance which the present Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Balfour) practised in furthering these works, even sitting up all night to resist the opposition of the very Members—or

many of them—who were now charging the Unionists with a new-born zeal in giving what he ventured to say was the true relief to Ireland. He did not know whether the Secretary to the Treasury had any power over his friends and allies, but he might take it from them (the Unionists) that they were not going to be dragooned, much less insulted by hon. Members opposite. If they continued their present course, with them must rest the responsibility for the delay in business. They (the Unionists) repudiated the assertion that their zeal was new born in favour of these light railways, or in favour of any other means for the relief of Irish distress, and he thought they ought to make it clear, both to the hon. Members opposite and to the Government itself, that they were going to have free discussion, and were not going to be muzzled, especially by a Government that relied for its majority on hon. Members opposite.

MR. V. GIBBS (Herts, St. Albans) asked what arrangement had been made for the re-adjustment of this expenditure by the House to complete these railways in the event of the Home Rule Bill passing? That might be an improbable event, but hon. Members opposite still contemplated it as a possibility, and it was not an encouraging outlook for the future if, when they asked reasonable questions as to money voted by that House at the instance of the late Government mainly for the purpose of benefiting the people of Ireland—

MR. T. M. HEALY: Whose money is it?

MR. V. GIBBS must appeal to the Chair. Not only were the Unionist Members subjected to the grossest ingratitude, but private Members, like an hon. Friend behind him, who had taken no part in this discussion, were subjected to personal insults. It was not a very cheering prospect for the future.

SIR J. T. HIBBERT: I think the proper time to discuss the question raised, as to the effect on this money in case of the Home Rule Bill becoming law, will be when legislation is brought forward to provide the £169,000 or £170,000. I do not think this is the proper time to discuss it.

MR. TOMLINSON (Preston) expressed the greatest dissatisfaction at the answer of the right hon. Gentleman. A

Bill was at present before the House, the object of which was to alter the whole relations between England and Ireland, and yet hon. Members could not get the slightest information as to how vast monetary transactions which had taken place would be affected by the future.

Mr. BARTLEY (Islington, N.) said, so much had been said by Irish Members as to English Members having nothing to do with this matter, that there was one branch of the subject that appeared to have been very much overlooked—namely, that they, the taxpayers, were supplying the money. The sum of £600,000 that was to be taken out of the Imperial Exchequer to construct these railways was very largely supplied by the English taxpayer. He knew the Irish Members said they paid all this taxation, and that the alliance between England and Ireland was very beneficial to this country.

Mr. T. M. HEALY: You rob us of £2,000,000 a year.

\*Mr. BARTLEY said, the practical point remained that they had got to vote this large sum of money. The Debate had elicited that only 15 miles of these railways had been completed, although four years had elapsed since the Light Railways Act was passed. He was the representative of a very poor district, which had subscribed its share to this large outlay, and protested against this additional Vote until at least they knew that some more material result was to be gained. They were entitled to more information before they passed the Vote.

\*Mr. JAMES LOWTHER (Kent, Thanet): Considerable assistance has been lent the Committee by the expression of their views by my two right hon. Friends who have in the immediate past each occupied the position of Chief Secretary for Ireland. There is another of our brother Members in this House who, if he had been in his place, might have been in a position to render very material assistance to the Committee, and especially to my right hon. Friend the Financial Secretary to the Treasury. I refer to the present occupant of the post of Chief Secretary. I do not know whether the right hon. Gentleman is within reach, but I think it would be most desirable we should have the views not only of the Financial Secretary, but of the Irish Government, because I need hardly remind

the Financial Secretary to the Treasury that the Chief Secretary for the time being must not allow his action to be hampered and his hand held back by even so eminent a Colleague as the Financial Secretary to the Treasury. This very salutary step in the direction of the improvement of Ireland is twofold in its character. One object was, no doubt, to afford relief by way of employment to the people in a period of distress in that country. But differing in that respect from almost all relief works or *quasi* relief works in the past, it was proposed by these Irish light railways, at the same time as they afforded immediate relief in the direction of providing employment to the people, to confer lasting benefits by means of the permanent improvement of the means of communication in Ireland. I must enter my protest against the idea that has been put forward in several quarters that this was the only relief work which has been undertaken of a permanent as distinguished from an ephemeral character; for, although I do not intend to detain the Committee by going into the question now, I must recall attention to the fact that the measures which I was charged with proposing to Parliament and carrying into execution in 1879-80 also aimed at the permanent as well as the ephemeral benefit of the Irish people. I hope the Financial Secretary, in the unfortunate absence of the Chief Secretary, will be able to tell us what is to be the policy of the Irish Government in the immediate future with regard to these works. Do they, when the agricultural classes will be engaged in spring sowing and other field work, and later on in the collection of the harvests, intend to expend large sums of public money at a time when the people do not require employment? I do not for a moment suggest that these works should be allowed to lie fallow for the best part of the year, but I say that the twofold object of the works should be carefully borne in mind. If they are to be pushed on during the spring and summer months we shall next winter have the old story over again, and the British taxpayer will be appealed to to find money for further relief works, whereas if these railways are judiciously managed, and if the resources at the disposal of the Go-

vernment in this respect are carefully husbanded, it may be practicable, while not allowing the works to fall into disrepair in any way, to increase the amount of employment at a time of the year when employment is really needed in the interests of the inhabitants of Ireland, rather than to obtain supposed financial results by the hurried execution of this railway movement. For my own part, I never was a great believer in these light railways as such, though I believe they have been productive of good results indirectly, that is to say, by affording employment to the people, but if the element of affording employment to the people is to be left out of consideration altogether, these works will only be a meagre benefit to the country at all. I hope we shall have some definite statement as to what is to be the policy of the Irish Government in the immediate future. I do not know whether the discussion will continue to such time as will enable the Chief Secretary to be in his place, and I hesitate to take the step of facilitating his presence by suggesting that some other Vote should be discussed till we have the advantage of the presence of the Chief Secretary. I hope we shall be afforded some indication of the line of policy the Government intend to take.

\*SIR J. T. HIBBERT: I do not intend to follow the right hon. Gentleman through all his remarks. I do not think it at all necessary that my right hon. Friend the Chief Secretary for Ireland should be present to speak upon the policy in respect to this Vote. What we are doing in respect to these light railways is loyally to carry out the policy of the late Government, and that will continue to be our policy. My opinion as to the object of these light railways is that it was partly to give employment to the people but also to confer a permanent advantage on the country by improving the means of communication. I think it best for Ireland that the railways should be pushed on as quickly as possible, and so far as I am concerned I shall use every effort to bring pressure to bear not only upon the Irish Board of Works but upon the Railway Companies for carrying out as quickly as possible the object we have in view. I would like to point out that we are not seeking to impose new taxation on the people of this country. Parliament has passed an Act providing

£600,000 for the purposes of these light railways, and we are now voting a sum to complete that £600,000, so that we are merely asking for a Vote to carry out the pledge given by Parliament on the subject. The right hon. Member for the Bordesley Division (Mr. Collinge) has asked me to use my influence as to the conduct of hon. Members. I can only answer for my own conduct, and as for myself I hope to treat not only this but every other question with consideration for every Member of this House, and in considering questions like this I deprecate either heat or the introduction of strong language.

MR. J. CHAMBERLAIN (Birmingham, W.): I think the Committee will recognise the absolute courtesy with which the right hon. Gentleman treats all who are concerned in this discussion, and on all other matters on which he addresses the House. I think also that the Committee will have heard with satisfaction the declaration of my right hon. Friend, that on this point the Government are following loyally the policy of the late Government. Some of us regret they do not carry that loyal sequence a little further. But I must point out to my right hon. Friend that circumstances have greatly changed the whole question of policy. I myself, I think, have been as active and prominent a supporter of the prosecution of these public works in Ireland as any Member of the House. I have believed it was a claim which Ireland had upon the Imperial Exchequer, and I believed, not only in regard to the employment which they would give in times of distress, but also as a permanent benefit to Ireland, these railways deserved our heartiest support. And, Sir, therefore most willingly I, for one, voted the contribution of £600,000 from the Imperial Exchequer to be wholly expended in Ireland. But that was when I was under the belief that Ireland not only was, but was going to be an integral portion of the United Kingdom. The policy of the late Government was to keep it so, and now that the present Government have adopted a totally different attitude, I certainly think it is time for this Committee to re-consider the whole question. I, for one, am not prepared to vote one single penny for these railways, or for any other act of



consideration of the kind, if Ireland is hereafter to be financially independent of assistance from this country. I certainly think the Committee would be quite wise in postponing the consideration of this Vote—if it does not actually reject it, until we know what the views of the House as a whole are on the Home Rule Bill. If this House is going to give to Ireland the power of taxation and the independent power of dealing with its own financial affairs, then I think the whole question of the provision of light railways should be handed over to Irish opinion. We have some reason to believe, from the debates that took place in the last Parliament, that Irish Members are opposed to this policy, and that if they were dealing with their own money, they would not subscribe a penny to these light railways. That is a point which I should be glad to relegate as a matter for their consideration.

SIR W. HARCOURT: I think it would hardly be a convenient method, especially having regard to the principles laid down by the Speaker this afternoon, if we were to graft a Home Rule debate on a Supplementary Estimate. There is a much simpler and more direct course for my right hon. Friend the Member for West Birmingham to take, and that is to negative this Vote, and take the opinion of the House upon it. We certainly cannot postpone the Vote. We think it our duty to press on the Vote, and if my right hon. Friend has made up his mind in that contingency, which he obviously contemplates as a certainty on this Vote, let us take a decision on the Vote at once. That will save the time of the Committee, and if my right hon. Friend is successful he will save the Exchequer £34,000, and we shall have come to a satisfactory conclusion on this Vote. At all events, do not let us waste our time by an interlocutory discussion of Home Rule on a Supplementary Vote for Irish Railways.

MR. T. W. RUSSELL ventured to submit that the discussion in the phases it had now assumed came exactly within the ruling of the Speaker. There was a debate concerning the Chief Secretary for Ireland, and did ever any discussion of the kind go forward in the House of Commons before without the presence of the Chief Secretary? He desired to know where the Chief Secretary was, and in

order to find it out he begged to move to report Progress.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Chairman do report Progress and ask leave to sit again."—(Mr. T. W. Russell.)

Question put.

The Committee divided:—Ayes 179; Noes 250.—(Division List, No. 20.)

Original Question again proposed.

MR. JAMES LOWTHER: As the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary is now in his place—

\*THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (MR. J. MORLEY, Newcastle-upon-Tyne): Perhaps, Sir, it will save the right hon. Gentleman's remarks if I intervene. I regret very much that I seemed to be wanting in courtesy to the Committee or in attention to the duties of my Department in not being present during the discussion of this Vote. The truth is I was very busily engaged, and I thought that there would be no doubt as to this money being voted. We are simply carrying out the policy initiated by right hon. Gentlemen opposite, and more than that, as I understand and as I maintain, a policy to which this House and Parliament is pledged. What we ask for is simply the vote of the money wanted in order to carry through a further stage the scheme introduced by the right hon. Gentleman opposite, a scheme which was approved by the House of Commons and Parliament of that day, and to give up which now would be to stultify the action of the late Government and the approval given to it by the late Parliament. Therefore it did not enter into my mind at all that there would have been the slightest doubt about the passing of this Vote. I regret that my absence should have been the cause, if it were the real cause, of delaying a Vote in no sense a Party Vote, and which in no sense can be made a Party Vote; and I do now respectfully hope that my absence may be considered to have been condoned, and that the Vote may be allowed to pass.

\*MR. JAMES LOWTHER: I have no desire to find fault with the right hon. Gentleman, who, I feel sure, was urgently occupied, and I have no doubt he came as soon as he could, but the presence of a representative of the Irish Government in the Committee was desired, not

to give any explanation as to the action of the late Government, but as to the future policy of the Irish Government with respect to the administration and expenditure of the money which the Committee was asked for. The question I wish to ask is this: Having regard to the fact that this light railway scheme was provided and sanctioned by Parliament for a twofold object—for providing employment in times of distress, and also for developing the local industries of the country—I wish to ask the right hon. Gentleman [*Cries of "Divide, divide!"*]—if his very disorderly friends will allow me to do so—whether he intends to push the works forward with all available speed during seed time, when it will be necessary to import labour to carry on the works, or whether he intends to bear in mind the fact that Parliament entered upon this work to a large extent with a view of affording employment in times of distress?

\*MR. J. MORLEY: I am not sure, Sir, that my friends are the most disorderly; but, as I understand that the question which the right hon. Gentleman has put to me has been already answered in substance by my right hon. Friend the Secretary to the Treasury, who speaks with quite as much authority as I should, I must very respectfully decline to answer it again.

MR. J. A. PEASE rose in his place, and claimed to move, "That the Question be now put;" but the CHAIRMAN withheld his assent, and declined then to put that Question.

Debate resumed.

MR. J. CHAMBERLAIN: I certainly think that the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary for Ireland will not promote the object he has in view of pushing forward the progress of business in this House if, when he rises in order to make an explanation and an apology, he accompanies that apology with an insinuation against his political opponents. Now, I beg to assure the right hon. Gentleman that the Motion which so tardily succeeded in gaining his presence was a perfectly *bonâ fide* Motion. It has already been held by the Speaker that to impute obstruction to any hon. Member of the House is disorderly and a breach of Privilege, but probably the new Members of the House

are not aware of that. The matter arose on the question asked by the right hon. Gentleman opposite, and the right hon. Gentleman, failing to obtain any satisfactory reply from the Secretary to the Treasury, asked for the presence of the Chief Secretary, who alone has authority in this House to speak as to what is the intention of the Government of Ireland with regard to this matter. The question the right hon. Gentleman put is a pertinent question which deserves a civil answer; and if the Chief Secretary refuses to give a civil answer, then I think the Committee will be perfectly justified in refusing to proceed with the Vote. The question was in what way the money was to be spent, and it was pointed out that if these works were to be proceeded with in the time of seed sowing or harvest they would enter into competition with labour devoted to other purposes. The simple question asked was whether these works were to proceed now, or whether in spreading them out the Chief Secretary would have some regard to the interests of the localities for whose benefit they were intended.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Sir W. HARCOURT, Derby): I should really like to do something, if I can, to soften the demonstrations that have been made. I am very anxious to bring this scene—I do not use the word in an objectionable sense—my right hon. Friend knows what I mean—to a conclusion. Now, as I understand that my right hon. Friend opposite rather complained of my not being in the House, I have been in the House a great many times this afternoon, and on every occasion I came into the House I found my right hon. Friend on his legs. I admire his oratory, but I felt after four or five times that I knew his case by heart. All I can say is that, in my opinion, my right hon. Friend the Chief Secretary has given a very civil answer. ["No."] Well, I think he has. There are some people who are determined to take no answer. I will give the answer over again, which has been given a dozen times this evening. It is that these works on the Light Irish Railways are going on in the regular course, in order to carry out the plan agreed to by the last Parliament on the proposal of the late Government. You may go on all this evening; you may go on all next week repeating these ques-

tions, and you can and will receive no other answer than that. It is an explicit and clear answer, and I do hope that under these circumstances the Committee will now consent to go to a Division.

Vote agreed to.

Original Question put, and agreed to.

Resolutions to be reported upon Monday next.

Committee to sit again this day.

#### SUPPLY—REPORT.

Resolutions [2nd March] reported.

#### CIVIL SERVICES AND REVENUE DEPARTMENTS, 1892-3 (SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES).

##### CLASS I.

1. "That a Supplementary sum, not exceeding £3,000, be granted to Her Majesty, to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March 1893, for certain re-arrangement of Rooms in the Houses of Parliament Buildings."

2. "That a Supplementary sum, not exceeding £5,500, be granted to Her Majesty, to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March 1893, for Expenditure in respect of Diplomatic and Consular Buildings in Egypt."

Resolutions agreed to.

#### COINAGE (No. 2) BILL.—(No. 221.)

Bill read the third time, and passed.

#### STANDING COMMITTEES (CHAIRMEN'S PANEL).

SIR HENRY JAMES reported from the Chairmen's Panel; that they had appointed Sir G. Osborne Morgan to act as Chairman of the Standing Committee for the consideration of Bills relating to Law, and Courts of Justice, and Legal Procedure.

Report to lie upon the Table.

#### SELECTION (STANDING COMMITTEES).

SIR JOHN R. MOWBRAY reported from the Committee of Selection; that they had added to the Standing Committee on Law, and Courts of Justice, and Legal Procedure, the following Fifteen Members in respect of the Places of Worship (Leasehold Enfranchisement) Bill:—Mr. Brunner, Viscount Cranborne, Mr. Crosfield, Mr. Wingfield-Digby, Mr. Lloyd-George, Mr. Stanley

Leighton, Mr. Perks, Sir Francis Sharpe Powell, Mr. Rentoul, Mr. Charles Rouldell, Mr. James Rowlands, Mr. Seely, Mr. Halley Stewart, Mr. Talbot, and Mr. Carvell Williams.

Report to lie upon the Table.

#### EVENING SITTING.

#### ORDERS OF THE DAY.

#### SUPPLY—COMMITTEE.

Order for Committee read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair."

#### RAILWAY AND CANAL RATES AND CHARGES.—RESOLUTION.

SIR ALBERT ROLLIT (Islington, S.), in rising to call attention to the subject of Railway and Canal Rates and Charges and the conditions of Traffic, and to move—

"That, in the opinion of this House, the revised railway rates, charges, and conditions of traffic are most prejudicial to the industries and agricultural and commercial interests of the country, and this House urges upon the Government the necessity of dealing promptly and effectively with the subject by legislation, declaring unreasonable rates, charges, and conditions illegal, and establishing, in connection with the Board of Trade or otherwise, a cheap, simple, and expeditious mode of determining in case of dispute what are reasonable or unreasonable rates, charges, and conditions,"

said, he need hardly give an assurance that he did not regard this in any sense or manner as a Party question. It appealed to the interests and feelings of the community, and he brought it before the House with a sincere appreciation of the services rendered not only by the President of the Board of Trade but by his Predecessor and the staffs of their respective Offices. He would also say that he introduced the subject in no spirit of hostility to the Railway Companies, for though he thought they had made a mistake, there were mutual interests between the companies and the traders, and he hoped that in time the Companies would realise that it was to their benefit to give every facility to commerce, so as to bring about that increase of traffic which experience

taught was the result of conferring these advantages. On this subject the mind of the country had been profoundly stirred. Some had said that it was a subject of interest; but he ventured to speak of it as a subject of the deepest anxiety, hence the agitation on the part of the Municipalities and the Chambers of Commerce and the commercial classes. The whole commercial community were unanimous on this matter. They recognised that in these days of competition the margin of profit was small, and that, therefore, every saving that could be legitimately effected must be secured. Then the consumer recognised that the cost of transport formed a material element in the cost of purchase, and was therefore largely interested in this question. He ventured to say that the State also was interested, and it would, he hoped, find a safe, a speedy, and a just solution of the difficulty. The object of the agitation which was got up years ago on the subject of railway rates, and which led to the passing of the Act of 1888, was not only to bring about revision, but also reduction, and the diminution in the maximum rates which was effected by the Parliamentary Committee showed that that was the case. When the Railway Companies proposed their new classification, to which great exception was taken, and which in many respects was felt to be preposterous, the feeling evoked showed that the object of the whole movement was to effect not merely the revision, but the reduction of the rates of the whole of the companies. Whatever might be said as to the various Committees which sat upon the subject, he ventured to say the whole House would regard the services of Lord Balfour of Burleigh and Sir Courtenay Boyle as having been of great value to the commercial community. The result of what was done was that a reduction was effected in the maximum rates, but experience had shown that what was intended in the maximum rates as a shield to the trader had proved a sword for injuring him. There really was some justification for the expression of the hon. Member for Aberdeen that maximum rates had proved to be a delusion and a snare. The hon. Member, he thought, had spoken of maximum rates as Parliamentary bayonets. He believed it was Cavour who said that you might do anything with bayonets

except sit on them, and these rates were bayonets which the traders of the country declined to sit upon. They emphatically desired them to be removed. It was said that in addition to a reduction in the maximum rates some reductions had been effected in the actual railway tariffs. Well, those reductions had been comparatively few in number. The reductions had been chiefly in Classes 4 and 5, which were not the subjects of the greater and more important traffic. The reductions were few in the earlier Classes, somewhat more marked in Classes 4 and 5, and were in favour of places where there was a little traffic, and in the interests of the larger traders, and not of the smaller, who were not in a position to fight their own battle. He did not propose to trouble the House with a long statistical enforcement of the statement he had made as to the limited number of reductions effected, and the large increases which had taken place. The enormity of the increases, for he could call it nothing else, had become common property, they were all too familiar to the trading community; and he thought he might take it that the rebates and reductions which had recently, and only recently, been promised were a virtual admission that the tariff that was in existence on the 1st of January was in many respects an exorbitant one. He did, however, propose to give to the House one or two typical illustrations of the increases effected by the Railway Companies in their rates. He had with him a list prepared by the London Chamber of Commerce at great cost; it contained some 2,000 rates, and he found from it a series of increases in articles of ordinary commerce ranging from 15 per cent. in the case of mustard seed to no less than 334½ per cent. in the case of pelts and other goods. He would take as a further illustration one or two articles of household use. He would mention first petroleum—an article of great importance to the poor for lighting purposes. He found that whereas for 20 years the rate on petroleum had been 5s., from the 1st of January it had been 25s. per ton, so that, as this was a low-priced article, the cost had been nearly doubled. The House might be interested to know that the consequence was that a village in Hampshire was prevented from using petroleum, and was now in darkness. In

like manner the Municipality of Walsall had been obliged to add 2d. in the £1 to the rates in respect of the manufacture of gas through the enhanced charge for the carriage of coal. In the grocery trade in Class 1 the rates had been advanced 4·3 per cent., and taking 20 large towns, the rates for one leading commodity had been increased 6 per cent., and a high authority—Mr. Rogers, of Sir John Travers & Sons—had stated that the increased tax on the grocery trade, according to his computation, would reach no less than £500,000. He could give other illustrations of the increased tax put on this trade, but, speaking generally, he might say that the enhanced charges had been from 35 per cent. to 40 per cent. As an instance of the audacity and rapacity on the part of the Railway Companies, an hon. Colleague had informed him that the Great Western, for the carriage of a pair of wheels and axles which were sent from Cardiff to Swansea, the old rate being 2s. 6d., had charged at the rate of 5s., or an increase of 100 per cent., and, not satisfied with that amount, the company sent in a new debit note charging the wheels as two tons, and demanding 18s., less the 5s. already paid, or an increase of 600 per cent., and when the wheels were sent back from Swansea to Cardiff a debit note was sent in for 13s. This was a fair illustration not only of the rapacity of the companies, but also of the confusion prevailing in their minds on this question of rates. It illustrated the extortion to which traders were subjected; but one would hardly have thought that a Railway Company would have made one of Her Majesty's Judges the subject of imposition. But he had a letter from one of the Judges, who spoke of a company having conveyed his luggage by goods train down into the country, and having not only charged him 25 per cent. on the old rate, but charged also for cartage, although the luggage had been carried to the station in his own carts. When this was pointed out the explanation was that the rate was "an inclusive rate for collecting, whether they did it or not," and on the Judge remonstrating, the traffic manager excused himself and his company on the ground that they had introduced the change to assimilate their system to that

of other companies, with all their rates inclusive of collecting and delivery, whether they did collect and deliver or not. The Judge applied to the conduct of the company an expression well known in Courts of Law, although not to be found perhaps in the railway vocabulary. There had been large increases in the rates for coal and iron, agricultural produce, dairy produce, fruit, market garden produce, as hon. Members would testify in the course of the Debate. One hon. Member would deal with the case of Ireland, where the rates had been rendered exceptionally high, and where cheap railway transport was one of the most essential conditions to the development of the country. He was recently in Denmark, where the dairy system was carried to a great point of perfection owing to the admirable method of collection, which made the supply of milk to Copenhagen one of the greatest commercial features which could be imagined. The milk was collected and submitted to a process of purification in a manner which might well be imitated in this country. The supply and the condition of it were due to cheap transit, and he had been told that the one country in Europe that could and ought to become the rival of Denmark in the matter of dairy produce was Ireland, but that would be impossible whilst the railway rates remained as at present. Market gardening he was told was being ruined by the new rates. The whole timber trade had been disorganized. Speaking as a shipowner, for many years it had been usual in the timber trade to ship and deal with goods by measurement. Now machine weight had been substituted.

MR. HANBURY (Preston): Alternatively.

SIR A. ROLLIT: Yes, with the alternative of computing the charge by measurement, but in a higher class. The Railway Companies could not have thought their case a good one, because when it was proposed that they should meet the representatives of the trade with a view to coming to a satisfactory arrangement they declined. The increase in the rates for the carriage of fish was about 1s. per cwt., except from his own Port of Hull and the Port of Grimsby, about which ports there were doubts, and he gave the company the benefit of them. The increase in the case of the common sorts of fish

was as great as in the case of the prime sorts—an obvious injustice, as there was 50 times as much of the former transported as of the latter, the common fish forming an important article of food for the poor. Moreover, in the case of the fish trade there was a new charge of 10s. a ton made on returned empties. One of the most important matters of trade, affecting 75 per cent. of the trading community, was the charge for small parcels of under 3cwt., known as “smalls.” There had been an increase in the rate of 3d. per hundredweight. He need hardly speak of the importance to London and other great distributing centres of this particular branch of trade. The increased charge which had been made had resulted in great loss to the trade, for the rate had often exceeded the profit on the articles. He spoke especially of one particular consignment of goods from Newcastle to London. Then as to empties, which were formerly in Class 4, but were now in Class 5, thereby paying the highest rate which could be demanded by the companies. This inflicted an injury, especially on London, and upon many branches of trade there. On returned empties there was an enormous difference of from 1d. to 7d. per hundredweight, a matter seriously affecting the drug, wine and spirit, mineral water and other trades. There was another point he should like to dwell upon for a moment, and that was the question of preference to the foreign trader. One of the chief provisions of the Act of 1888 was to the effect that there should be no preferences given to foreign as compared with the home trade. This was not a question of protection. It was merely a question of justice to home industries and of regard for the best of all markets—namely, home markets. Those preferences used to exist to a large extent under the old system, and goods were absolutely brought, especially dairy and agricultural produce, from places like Hamburg on the Continent and carried by the railways at a less rate than goods produced at home could be sent from one place to another. Those preferences still existed to a great extent. In the sugar trade the preference given to the traffic from Hamburg *viâ* Gloucester was 9s. 7d. per ton. These preferences should cease to exist, and home producers should be treated on a fair and equitable basis. He could give many

instances of matters of perhaps less, but still of great importance, in all of which the companies had gained and the traders had lost. For instance, they now carried 20 cwt. instead of 21 cwt. to the ton; a fraction of a cwt. or a fraction of a 1d. was charged to the benefit of the company; the rebates were reduced in cases where the consignee performed his own delivery. Their object was, as far as possible, to monopolise the service terminals in relation to delivery and the like. The new risk note was an onerous thing to the trader, as it imposed on the consignor or consignee the risk of transit; and this he believed to be contrary to the spirit of the Railway and Canal Traffic Act of 1854. Now, what was the view of the companies in regard to these increased charges? They alleged that they were to be the judges of the amount of freight an industry would bear in relation to the imposition of rates. If anyone should be able to judge of that it should be the traders concerned, certainly not the people who fixed the rate. In this respect the companies had a giant's strength, and they used it like a giant. The country could not be surprised at the indignation which had been aroused, for it was based on the principle of self-preservation. That feeling it was that induced the traders to come to Parliament and ask for assistance in removing a great burden. The companies said they had not had time to revise the rates; but they had had since August, 1891, for the bulk of the rates, and for the through rates they had had since June, 1892. But even this excuse was not made until the agitation had occurred and a strong feeling had been aroused on the subject. Sir Henry Oakley, in his letters of January 7th, January 24th, and February 7th, did not speak of rebates in regard to rates prior to January 1st. The whole spirit of his letters was that of the impenitent thief, who prayed, “Oh, Lord, convert me, but not to-day.” The action of the companies had been a constant course of procrastination. It was evident from Sir Henry Oakley's letters that the companies saw they had made a mistake, and that being so they ought to bear the consequences of it. Mr. Cawkwell, in his letter in yesterday's *Times*, admitted that an error had been made, and showed some disposition to make satisfaction for

it, but it was a strange coincidence that that letter did not appear until Parliament was about to be moved on the subject. It seemed from first to last of the agitation that pressure had been necessary to obtain from the companies what they ought to have conceded as a matter of justice to the traders—what they ought to have conceded gladly in their own interest for the development of trade. It was said that time was required to adjust the special rates, and that if time was allowed that readjustment would take place. But what were the prospects in connection with the revision? He would give one or two figures to show what had been done in the way of revision, and he would ask whether the rates as revised were just or unjust. In the case of agricultural seeds, from Hull to Carlisle the old rate was 22s. 6d. per ton, at the company's risk. From January 1st the rate was 33s. 1d. per ton; and the re-revised rate now proposed was 29s. 10d. at the owner's risk.

MR. MUNDELLA: On what line is that?

SIR A. ROLLIT said, it was mainly on the North Eastern. The revised rate would be an increase of 33 per cent. on the original rate, and the carriage would be at the owner's instead of the company's risk. In another case of carriage from Andover to Mitchelkener the old rate was 7s. 6d. per ton; the rate on January 1st was 14s. 4d.; and the re-revised rate 13s., an increase of from 40 to 50 per cent. In the case of straw in bundles carried from Andover to Dimpleton, the old rate was 12s. 6d.; the rate on January 1st, 23s. 5d.; and the re-revised rate 16s. 2d. Again, the re-revised rate for vegetables from Snodland, in Kent, to London was quite 30 per cent. above the old rates. As far as could be judged, the most recently revised rates were from 15 to 30 per cent. in excess of the old rates; and that would not be acceptable either to the House or to the country. He would pass on to the next point—namely, what were the proposals of the traders. No doubt, a temporary adjustment could easily be made, but owing to what had transpired the controversy had assumed an acute form, and the traders now distinctly challenged the right of one party to a bargain to fix the rate for the other. They challenged the statement that the

companies were the best judges in their own interest of what a particular industry would bear. They said that neither the company nor the trader ought to define the terms of the bargain for the other. *Nemo debet* . . . was an old principle which was as true to-day as it was in old Roman times. He did not believe that either the House or the country would now accept an order of "as you were" from the companies. The object of the commercial crusade which had taken place on the matter of railway rates would be thrown away by any such permanent arrangement. If such an arrangement were made after what had passed, what security would there be for a settled state of commercial affairs, enabling bargains to be made with confidence, when there had been such a disposition on the part of the companies to take advantage of the traders? Maximum rates which had been proposed as a shield had been used as a sword against the traders, and the traders must now find some other shield. That was one of the conditions on which they entered upon the present stage of the controversy. Then, if neither party, as he submitted, was to be the judge in his own case, what tribunal—for there must be a tribunal—should be elected for the purpose. It had been suggested as a remedy that there should be a reduction of the maximum rates all round on the percentage system, but that, he thought, would be a violent, and, in many respects, an unjust, and far from a beneficial arrangement. Then it had been suggested that the State should become the owner of the railways, and so imitate other countries. He might say here that he regretted that the opportunity afforded for doing this in the 21 years after the passing of the Act of 1846 had not been availed of. The problem, no doubt, was a difficult one to deal with. He regretted that the experience of other countries in regard to haulage had not been gone into at the inquiry. But if the remedies to which he had referred were impracticable at present, he would ask whether the Railway Commission was a tribunal capable of dealing with the matter? On behalf of the commercial community he answered that it was not, as the private trader would not be able to bear the expense of fighting a great monopolist company

before it. What was wanted was a tribunal which would be as accessible to the small as to the large trader. They might judge of the value of the Railway Commission by looking at the figures which showed the extent to which it had been resorted to. In 1889, 15 persons had resorted to it; in 1890, 28; in 1891, 28; and in 1892, 22. The cost of the Commission he found to amount to £400 for each occasion on which it sat. Then they had to add to that the cost of the Judge who sat *ex-officio*, and the registrars and so on, which made it a most costly and inevitably a most dilatory tribunal, utterly unsuitable for commercial purposes. If proceedings were taken before the Railway Commission after endeavouring to settle a case amicably there might be some difference. If, as in the case of other Courts, each Commissioner sat alone, the tribunal would be better, but it was an anachronism at present for the trial of these cases. This was a case in which some speedy, summary, and effective form of arbitration would be the best mode of dealing with commercial matters. In these days of telegraphs and telephones accounts could not be kept open and books unclosed. There must be some expert treatment of commercial matters—some treatment which would bring about a settlement speedily and effectually, and at the same time at small expense. Clause 31 of the Act of 1888 conveyed a suggestion as to the form of tribunal the traders desired. That clause, in the United States law, enabled an attempt at amicable adjustment between the companies and the trader, and it had been attended he believed with very good results. It did not, however, in this country come under the definition of jurisprudence. The Board of Trade might arbitrate and report to the Railway Commission the result of its attempt to bring about an amicable adjustment, and require that tribunal to carry out its wishes, but for his own part he would give power to the Board of Trade itself to enforce what it believed to be just. Another suggestion was the appointment of an arbitrator or umpire to adjust disputes between the traders and the companies. If the right hon. Gentleman the President of the Board of Trade saw any difficulty in this, he would remind him that the Provisional Orders Acts them-

selves embodied the Board of Trade Arbitration Act of 1884, so that the whole machinery was at present in the hands of the Board of Trade if they cared to exercise it, and if Parliament sanctioned that course being taken. Clause 31, too, gave the President the opportunity of procuring expert aid to obtain an amicable adjustment. Why should not that aid take the form of an umpire or arbitrator capable of deciding cases? It would be said that this would make an undue demand on the Board, and that a Government Department so large would be an evil. In France the Department was a large one, and it accomplished all this. It gave them the best illustration of the State controlling the railways as distinguished from owning them. Even the evil—and he granted that it was an evil—of an enlarged Department of the State would be less than the evil which was oppressing the traders at the present moment, and with which the President of the Board of Trade and his staff was incapable of dealing. There was a provision in the Act of 1883 which justified his suggestion. That measure authorised the Board of Trade to act judicially between the traders and the Railway Companies in regard to the determination of service terminals. Why should not that principle be applied to questions of rates and preferences? The right hon. Gentleman must not anticipate that he would have millions of cases before him. There would be some test cases at first for determination, but the number requiring hearing would be comparatively limited. It had been said that there was but one step between the policeman and politeness. He ventured to think that if the Board of Trade were made the policeman there would be a great deal more politeness on the part of the companies to the traders, and much less need for requisitioning the services of the policeman. In addition to the question of procedure there was a matter of law which he thought would also require attention. The traders would not now be satisfied to be protected merely by maximum rates. In his opinion, every rate ought to be a reasonable rate. The maximum rate might still be retained in order to show traders what was the worst they could expect. It would, at least, be a basis on which they might



make their bargains. But why should a rate which, though generally reasonable, was in a particular case unjust and unreasonable, be enforced against a trader? He thought it should be taken that the maximum rate should be *primâ facie* a reasonable and proper one, but subject to reduction in particular cases. There was a precedent for this in the Railway and Canal Traffic Act of 1854, under which a special contract might be made between the carrier and the trader, but if its terms were unreasonable such contract might be held to be void by the Judge who tried the case. There was also a precedent in the Act of 1888. Sub-section 31—the adjusting section—of that Act assumed the possibility of rates being within the maximum, and yet unreasonable. The cases which were to be referred to the Board of Trade were cases of dispute within the maximum. Maximum rates were creatures of the Statute Book. The old Common Law required that in the case of carriers who, more or less, had monopolies, that their rates should be based on reason and justice. The Railway Companies were carriers and, as such, should be made subject to the principles of the old Common Law. He was aware that the subject was one which was very difficult to deal with in the time at his disposal. It had been the subject of years of investigation and consideration. It was complex and technical, but there were others in the House who, like his hon. Friend the Member for Preston (Mr. Hanbury) had had practical experience of the Commissions and Committees which had sat on the subject, and would be able from their knowledge of various branches of trade to contribute that practical information which was so essential to the House in dealing with the question. He concluded by asking on behalf of the traders for the help of the Government and for relief from Parliament. He put to the right hon. Gentleman the President of the Board of Trade that it was the duty of statesmanship to solve quietly and safely problems which the traders might otherwise attempt to solve by more violent and less advantageous methods. He felt that if that which the traders believed to be just were done it would conduce to the commercial prosperity of the country; it would relieve traders and others of a very heavy bur-

den, and would further the best interests not only of the community but of the Railway Companies themselves. He moved the Resolution of which he had given notice.

SIR J. WHITEHEAD (Leicester) seconded the Motion. He said he should like to recall to the House one or two of the points which had led up to the controversy lately carried on between the traders on the one side and the Railway Companies on the other. It would be within the recollection of a large number of Members that in the first instance there was no intention whatever to confer a monopoly on the Railway Companies. The Railway Companies, as originally constituted, were to be toll takers. They were not to be sole carriers but competitive carriers. Parliament, however, had little doubt that each company would have a monopoly on its own line, and it attempted to restrict the charges by fixing maximum rates. That was the condition on which the lines were allowed to be laid. It was soon found that the maximum fixed was far too high, and, in point of fact, was no check whatever on the Railway Companies. But there was at that time a check on the Railway Companies, inasmuch as there was competition of a real character. From and to certain points there was competition by sea; there were the old carriers still competing for the light and short distance traffic; there were the canals, which were strong competitors for all kinds of goods; and, moreover, the Railway Companies had not at that time combined to keep up rates, so that there was effective competition in rates between the companies themselves. Somehow or other, by a stealthy and persistent policy continued over a great number of years, the conditions of the competition which then existed were now entirely gone. They were gone mainly in consequence of the efforts which had been made by the Railway Companies to bring about amalgamations, and to buy up and put down competition. Within quite recent years docks had been bought up, and they were being bought up whenever opportunity arose, so that the freight charges could be controlled by the Railway Companies. The canals had been largely acquired by the Railway Companies with the view of stifling com-

petition with their own lines. Already over 1,200 miles of canals had been acquired by the Railway Companies, who to-day held the most important links between the Northern and Southern navigations. In point of fact, they had secured what was popularly known as the neck of the bottle. A process of the amalgamation of the different lines had also being going on, so that there were now very few small lines, as there were very few large ones, the small lines having been absorbed by the large ones. He believed he was correct in saying that the London and North-Western Railway alone consisted of no fewer than 51 different systems. In his judgment, one of the duties of the House of Commons in the future would be to take care that no amalgamation between Railway Companies should take place unless under conditions favourable to the traders. One was bound to recognise the fact that the Railway Companies were now all pulling together. Their combined aggressiveness when before the Board of Trade showed that such was the case, whilst their united action in raising the rates on the 1st January proved beyond question that the defence afforded to traders and agriculturists by competition in times gone by had been destroyed. If further evidence were needed it was to be found in the replies given in the House of Commons by the President of the Board of Trade to the questions which had been addressed to him on the subject. The right hon. Gentleman's answers, and the letters he had read, all tended to show that no Railway Company could do what it liked of its own volition, as all the large companies were banded together. The protection originally afforded to the traders and agriculturists of the country had, it seemed to him, been broken down by the deliberate, long-sustained, and clever—he ventured to say too clever—policy of the companies. Not only this, but the Railway Companies had invented a new system in the shape of station terminals, and had succeeded in getting them allowed by Parliament. They had at the same time secured enormously high powers in regard to rates. He should like to remind the House that they had obtained those powers by means of promises which they had not kept. They prevented opposition to the proposals they made in

1889, by representing that the proposed revision related to maximum powers only, and did not touch the actual rates. They even went further, and said they had no intention of raising the actual rates. They urged that they required a margin, and over and above the then existing rates, in order to provide for serious emergencies, such as an advance in coal, an advance in iron, a possible advance in labour, and a possible shortening of the hours of labour. Since the companies secured these powers under the maximum charges, no emergency such as was then contemplated had arisen, and yet they had availed themselves of such powers to the full extent. The companies said that when the schedules of rates were issued on the 16th December it was not intended that they should be permanent. But why did they not say so at the time? They knew that the rates they proposed would be distinctly injurious to trade and agriculture, but they did not say they were merely provisional, until there was a universal outcry in the country, and the Board of Trade began to put some pressure upon them. Even now, the concessions made by the companies were only of a very partial character. To some extent they were bending to the storm, but they were not doing so with a good grace. He would give the House one or two examples of the way in which companies had, under the pressure of the Board of Trade and the traders, amended these rates, and he might say he had been very careful to verify his figures. He found that the charge for conveying agricultural seeds in bags from an important centre of agriculture, Andover to Overton, under the old rate was 5s. 6d. per ton, that under the new rates it was 10s. 10d. per ton, and under the revised rates, after the application of pressure by the Board of Trade and the traders, it was 9s. 7d. per ton. From Andover to Southampton the old charge was 5s., the new charge 11s. 7d., and the revised charge 6s. The charge for straw in bundles from Andover to Wimbledon was formerly 12s. 6d., whilst under the new rates it was 23s. 5d., and under the revised rates 16s. 2d., while from Andover to Nine Elms the old rate was 14s. 2d., the new rate 16s. 10d., and the revised rate also 16s. 10d. He returned to agricultural seeds, which from another point of view had been referred

to by the hon. Member opposite. The concessions were only of a very partial character. Agricultural seeds from Chester to Carlisle under the old rate was 21s. 3d.; under the new rate 30s. 7d.; but under the revised rate 27s. 7d. Iron tanks and cisterns sent from London to stations on different lines average per ton under the old rate 33s. 3d., under the new rate 55s. 6d., and under the revised rate 45s. 8d. It was proposed on one occasion to send 13,000ft. of timber from Ledbury to High Wycombe, and while it was found that the old rate would have been £244 18s. 10d., the new rate had been raised to £523 18s. 8d.; and after a good deal of discussion between the timber merchant and the Railway Company they eventually said that they would take the timber for £390 7s. 11d. It seemed to him that his was a case in which an arbitrator might be brought in, as had been suggested by his hon. Friend. There were, however, thousands of cases in which no adjustment had yet been possible, or had even been attempted. The scale of charges which came into force on January 1 still remained in force. For example, the increase to one firm alone in the empties which they sent over one line amounted to £2,500 a year. The increased rates for "small" to the typical stations which were mentioned by Sir George Findlay during the Board of Trade inquiry were these:—In Class I., south of the Thames, the increase was 40 per cent.; in Class II. the increase was  $37\frac{1}{2}$  per cent.; in Class III.,  $34\frac{1}{2}$  per cent.; and in Class IV., 25 per cent. The increase of rates for the lines running North was not so great as in the South, but still they were very considerable. Those figures had been forwarded to the Board of Trade more than four weeks ago; they were also sent to the Railway Companies, but no remission of these figures had been given except in regard to two rates on the South-Western system. As to the preference given to foreigners, he said that great difficulty was experienced by the traders and agriculturists in obtaining information from the Railway Companies. He had received a letter from a correspondent in Cupar, Fifeshire, showing that the North British Railway Company had been overcharging him. He applied to the secretary to supply par-

*Sir J. Whitehead*

ticulars of the charges for haulage, motive power, use of wagons, loading and unloading, covering and uncovering. The Company refused to give the information though they were obliged to do so by the Act. The correspondent then wrote to the Board of Trade, but the Department stated that they had no power to settle the dispute, and suggested that he should resort to legal measures. It was not surprising that under these circumstances there had been a falling off in the receipts of the Railway Companies, and that trade throughout the country was suffering. The Returns of the Railway Companies showed a considerable reduction in the amount of their revenue, although some portion of the decrease might, perhaps, be attributed to the rebate which they proposed to allow when the rates were finally settled. It was evident that the Railway Companies were acting either in total ignorance of the wants of the traders of this country or that they were fully aware of the effect their action would have upon that trade. In his opinion, the Railway Companies were acting upon a well-thought-out system. The evidence given before the Joint Committee of the two Houses of Parliament showed that the Directors and Managers of Railway Companies were fully aware that they were already exacting all they could from the trading community for the carriage of goods, and that it was not their intention to increase their rates. In the face of such evidence as that he should like to ask the House what they thought of the statements that had been made by the Chairmen of the different Railway Companies at the annual meetings which had been held during the last month, that they had given no pledge that the rates should not be increased. The great difficulty that the traders were in was that they had no power to compel the Railway Companies to fix reasonable rates. The Board of Trade had power to mediate, but not to arbitrate; they had power to advise but not to determine. The Railway Companies were quite aware of that fact, and unfortunately they were in a position to do exactly what they liked and to raise the rates up to a maximum, which went far beyond any practicable charge. The Railway Companies would continue to charge excessive rates unless Parliament interfered in the matter. It appeared to

him that the time had arrived when that House should, not in the interest of the trader or of the agriculturist alone, but in the interest of the general community, determine that in the event of any dispute arising between the traders and the Railway Companies, the decision of the question should no longer be left to the irresponsible discretion of the Railway Companies; and he hoped that the Board of Trade and the Government, who must have realised the very serious aspect which this question had assumed and the feeling that had arisen with regard to the matter throughout the length and breadth of the land, would come to the conclusion that some check ought to be put upon the companies by legislation.

#### Amendment proposed,

To leave out from the word "That" to the end of the Question, in order to add the words "in the opinion of this House, the revised railway rates, charges, and conditions of traffic are most prejudicial to the industries and agricultural and commercial interests of the country, and this House urges upon the Government the necessity of dealing promptly and effectively with the subject by legislation, declaring unreasonable rates, charges, and conditions illegal, and establishing, in connection with the Board of Trade or otherwise, a cheap, simple, and expeditious mode of determining in case of dispute what are reasonable or unreasonable rates, charges, and conditions,"—(*Sir Albert Rollit.*)

—instead thereof.

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question."

\***SIR A. HICKMAN** (Wolverhampton, W.) said, he supported the Resolution because it was just, expedient, and practicable. If there existed a natural competition among the Railway Companies there would have been no need for this Motion, but the Railway Companies were banded together so that no company could reduce a rate without the consent of the others. The London and North-Western, the Great Western, and the Midland stretched from sea to sea, their capital amounted to hundreds of millions, but the conduct of the business of each company was practically out of its own hands. It had been admitted by the managers that when they had been satisfied it would be right to reduce a rate they could not do it because the companies would not consent. A company had power to

raise rates, but it had no power to reduce them. This state of things had come about from a fear of a war of rates. What was wanted was a tribunal which should emancipate the Railway Companies and enable them to reduce rates when they saw they ought to be reduced without running the risk of a ruinous war of rates. The natural consequence of a great monopoly was that the monopolists neglected all opportunities of reform. During the last 10 years operating expenses had been reduced by one-half in the United States simply by improvements in the rolling stock, but in this country operating expenses had increased. He was interested in iron works in the United States which were charged rates less than half those that the Railway Companies of this country said would be confiscation. A railway manager had told him that he had tried an American bogey wagon on which 25 tons could be moved with the same motive power as it took to move 10 tons with the ordinary English wagon. A mineral train of 1,500 tons was drawn in the United States at the same cost as one of 200 or 300 tons in this country. Here a traveller could enjoy all the luxuries of a sleeping car at a less rate per mile than was charged for coals. Competing trains were run at the same times when one would accommodate the public. The stoppage of this competition between Wolverhampton and London would save £5,000 a year. No trader in his senses would dream of taking a case before the Railway Commission. The Liverpool Corn Trade Association had gone to the Commission against the London and North-Western Railway Company, which charged for the carriage of corn 8s. 3d. from Cardiff to Birmingham, 173 miles, and 11s. 3d. from Liverpool to Birmingham, 98 miles. An injunction was granted against the Company, who simply raised the rate from Cardiff. The Association commenced a similar suit against the Great Western, and this time the Railway Company won. Questions of costs came in. The traders were allowed but two counsel and two guineas a day for expert witnesses. The companies were allowed three counsel and from 25 to 12 guineas a day for witnesses. What was wanted was a tribunal which should say that if a company could

run 173 miles for 8s. 4d. it should be compelled to charge less than 11s. 3d. for 98 miles for the same traffic. Wine was carried from Dieppe to Wolverhampton for the same as from London to Wolverhampton. It cost less to bring corn from Odessa to Birmingham than from the Eastern Counties. It cost less to bring iron to London from Belgium than from Staffordshire. There was abundant precedent for what was proposed. In the Act of 1873 the Railway Commission were empowered to fix reasonable charges for terminals, &c., and in the Provisional Order Acts of last Session the arbitrator appointed by the Board of Trade was authorised to settle what should be paid for services at stations, collection, delivery, retention of wagons, loading and unloading, coupling and uncoupling, &c. All that was asked was that those powers should be extended to rates, and then only if the rates were unreasonable. It was quite absurd to suppose that the arbitrators appointed by the Board of Trade would act unfairly towards the Railway Company. A clear case of unreasonableness would have to be made out before the arbitrators would act. He asked the House to release the Railway Companies from the bonds against which they themselves dare not struggle, and to set free the springs of trade and agriculture in peace.

\*SIR JULIAN GOLDSMID (St. Pancras, S.) said, he did not think it was right that all the speaking should be on one side. The House of Commons was always willing to hear some one on the other side of the case, and he therefore ventured to make a few observations, because he happened to be a Director of the railway line which had been honoured with more words of compliment than any of the other lines of the United Kingdom—namely, the London and Brighton Railway Company. In order to show the House that the Railway Companies did not deserve all the hard words used by his hon. Friend the Member for South Islington (Sir Albert Rollit) he would speak plainly as to what had occurred at his Board. Within 10 days after the 1st of January, when they found that the proposal of fixing maximum rates had produced not only a feeling of irritation but some unfairness towards various trades, the Board of the Brighton line assembled and gave instructions that the whole of

the rates should be revised in order to meet all legitimate demands. Their general instruction, given within 10 days or a fortnight from January 1st, was that all rates were to be taken as far as possible on the level of the old rates. In the case of the Brighton Company that meant that 4,500,000 of rates had to be entirely revised. He found that in the two months that had just elapsed there had been 84,960 Minutes, so that the House would see how few the Minutes had been to revise 4,500,000 of rates. And the Brighton Railway was not a goods railway in the ordinary sense of the word. It was mainly a passenger railway. But even that passenger railway had 4,500,000 of rates, and that being so the House would understand how much more difficult and how much longer must be the task of the London and North-Western Company with 30,000,000 of rates. He could only say on behalf of the Company he represented that they were determined to satisfy all legitimate complaints of traders, and the managers of that railway, and he believed of all other railways, were working as hard as men could work to grapple with their task. He now came to the question of fixing the maximum rate. The Member for North Islington (Sir Albert Rollit) had said that the original movement with regard to railway rates was intended for reduction, and not for revision; but he would like to point to the evidence taken by the Committee in which it would be found stated by many traders that they did not wish to reduce the earnings of the Railway Companies through a fresh classification. At the meetings of the Railway Commission he, in common with others, had advised that under the circumstances of the case it was better for the Railway Companies to lose, as they would lose largely by the revision of rates, rather than give any fair cause of complaint to traders. That principle was generally accepted at the Railway Association, and therefore hon. Members would see that all their complaints against the companies were not thoroughly justified. The fixing of the maximum rates as a temporary measure was, in his opinion, a mistake. It was committed avowedly as a temporary measure by the managers, who had said, and had said truly and honestly, that they had not had time to go

through all the rates to revise them. The increase in the rates was not to be more than 5 per cent., and though it might be unwise from some points of view to make any increase, still the statement of the hon. Member for South Islington, that from 15 to 20 or 30 per cent. was intended as permanent increase, was absolutely wrong. Whatever hon. Members might say, the Railway Companies were traders as well as the traders themselves. He might be told that they were traders with a monopoly, but that was true only to a limited extent, for there was carriage by water as well as carriage by rail. The hon. Member for South Islington had said that the trader should fix his own rates and not the Railway Company.

SIR ALBERT ROLLIT: That is a mistake.

\*SIR JULIAN GOLDSMID: I took down the words of the hon. Member at the time. He said, "The railways consider they ought to be the judges as to what tax industry should bear, but I say the trades should be the judges."

SIR ALBERT ROLLIT: What I said was that the trader having a knowledge of his own trade was better qualified to judge, but I added that neither the railway nor the trader should be the judge in the case.

\*SIR JULIAN GOLDSMID said, the hon. Member had used the words he had quoted in the early portion of his speech, but half an hour later when he came to the tribunal the hon. Member modified his statement, and said that neither should be the judge, but that the Board of Trade should step in, and, according to the modern theory of the Conservative Radical, that the Government should settle everything. It was perfectly obvious that the Railway Companies were traders just as much as the traders themselves, and any company which did anything to reduce its business must be cutting its own throat; while, as had been stated and re-stated over and over again, a rebate would be allowed in every case from 1st January. Consequently, it was not quite fair to say that Railway

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Companies were inflicting a loss on the trading community. It could not be said that the trader suffered loss if the money was returned. It had been stated that the London and North-Western Company, through their Deputy Chairman, had been induced by the pressure of the hon. Member's Motion to publish the letter to which reference had been made. It was only fair to that gentleman—whom he (Sir Julian Goldsmid) did not know—to say that was not so. What happened was this: At several meetings of the Railway Commission it was discussed in what form the announcement with regard to the rates should be made, whether in a general form or a special form, and it was eventually decided that it should be in a special form. Many of the Railway Companies had had prepared their papers ready for publication, and, therefore, it was not because of the pressure of the hon. Member that the letter of the London and North Western was published, but because it was thought to be right that the intentions of the company should be made known as soon as possible. It might be thought that these intentions were not published soon enough. In the case of the Brighton Railway Company the information was divulged in the middle of January.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE (Mr. A. J. MUNDELLA, Sheffield, Brightside): February.

\*SIR JULIAN GOLDSMID said, the first notice had been published in the middle of January and another notice was published in the middle of February. He had been a party to the preparation of those notices, and he therefore spoke with authority on the matter. He thought the other Railway Companies had made a mistake in not publishing notice of their intentions as soon as possible, but it was obvious that the companies had not meant to maintain these maximum rates, because 20 railway managers had been occupied day and night in revising these rates. He said, therefore, that if reasonable time had been allowed to the railway managers, all the rates complained of would have been subjected to careful revision. In the particular case of the

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Brighton Railway Company, he believed their book would be ready on the 17th of this month, and he could assure the House that the labour thrown upon the small number of railway servants competent for this work had been very great indeed. His hon. Friend the Member for Islington (Sir Albert Rollit) had talked about the Railway Companies intending to maintain the increase in the rates amounting to 15, 20, and 30 per cent., but there really was no intention on the part of the companies to maintain such increase. He trusted, therefore, that the fears of any trader which might have been raised by that statement would be abated when he knew that the overcharge would be returned when the revision of the rates was completed. His hon. Friend had also contended that the Board of Trade should fix not only the maximum rates, but the rates themselves. How far would that principle be applied? He was afraid that on this principle they would soon go back to what had been tried and found wanting when the prices of many commodities were fixed by Act of Parliament. It was better that the railway management should be left to the companies themselves, as was decided by the House of Commons years ago in the time of Mr. Disraeli. If the House believed, as he asked them to believe, that it was the intention of all Railway Companies to meet all the reasonable demands of traders, he thought they would come to the conclusion that there was no reason for passing this Resolution. So far as the Brighton Railway Company was concerned, they had reduced the rates for vegetable produce even below the amount they stood at in former times, and so much so that several growers of vegetables in their districts intended greatly to increase their production. He mentioned that to show that the lowering of rates was even most beneficial to both sides. He ventured to say, without any authority from the Railway Companies, but simply from the knowledge he possessed on the subject, that this proposal to appoint arbitrators to settle the 250,000,000 of rates was perfectly absurd and impossible. It was far better to allow these arrangements to be made under the pressure of public opinion, and under the natural desire of all Railway Companies to stand on good terms with

*Sir Julian Goldsmid*

their customers. He knew that considerable pressure had been brought to bear in this matter on the President of the Board of Trade; he knew that the right hon. Gentleman took a deep interest in all that was under his control; and he believed, also, that the legitimate desires of the right hon. Gentleman with regard to the railway rates would be met as far as possible by the Railway Companies.

\*MR. FREEMAN-MITFORD (Warwick, Stratford) said, that as the Representative of a large agricultural district, he wished to touch upon a few points that had not been dealt with in the course of the Debate. Agriculture had been altogether left out in the cold in the remarks of hon. Gentlemen. The hon. Baronet who had just spoken had urged upon them to leave this matter to the Railway Companies. That was very much like giving advice to the lamb to leave it to the wolf whether it should eat it up or not. This fresh attack on agriculture by the Railway Companies had been made at a most unfortunate moment. Agriculture was at its last gasp, and the Railway Companies had now got it by the throat and were determined apparently to shake the little life that was left out of it. Few people who were not connected with agriculture could realise the importance of this question to the small farmers. The farmer was a very patient person—he had been long-suffering in the past, especially in this matter of railway rates—but there must be an end to even his patience, and his powers of endurance. In the district he represented the Great Western Railway Company exercised something like an omnipotent monopoly; and some of the rates which that company charged were such as to make it absolutely impossible for the farmer to carry on his business. With regard to milk, the Midland, Great Northern, and the London and North-Western Companies had retained the old rates of 1d. per gallon up to 100 miles, making no charge for the carriage of empties. The Great Western charges 1½d. for the same distance, and charges also for empties. The company relieved the milk

contractors of London of the cost of the carriage for empties, and charged it on the farmer, the very last man who could stand any further burden being placed on him. The hon. Member for South Islington (Sir Albert Rollit) had stated that the additional tax upon the growing of garden produce in the neighbourhood of London, owing to these railway rates, amounted to 30 per cent. Would the House believe that the rates for garden produce from Evesham to Manchester had gone up from 15s. 10d. to 23s. 4d.? Evesham was the centre of a large market gardening industry; it had often been called the Garden of England. Its garden produce went to Manchester and to other large towns, and the effect of the rates of the Great Western Company was that an additional tax of no less than £3 per acre was placed on every yard of land these farmers cultivated. Was that condition of things to be tolerated, and were they to trust themselves to the Railway Companies who had imposed these rates as suggested by the hon. Baronet (Sir Julian Goldsmid)? He thought it was absolutely impossible to expect the farmers to stand the conduct of the Railway Companies much longer. If these rates were to continue—and so far as he could see in the case of the Great Western Company, they had absolutely no guarantee that the rates would not be continued—the last death blow would have been given to agriculture in the district which he represented. He deprecated altogether that this discussion should assume anything of an academic form; they did not want the history of rates, they wanted remedies sharp, short, and decisive, which would relieve the farmer from the terrible imposition which had been put upon him by the Railway Companies; and unless that imposition was removed from his shoulders, he must be absolutely and entirely ruined. It was in that belief that he humbly asked the House to support unanimously the Motion of the hon. Member for South Islington.

\*MR. D. R. PLUNKET (Dublin University): Mr. Speaker, I desire only to occupy the time of the House for a very brief period. I certainly feel, speaking as a Director of one of the great railways, very much as my hon. Friend the Mem-

ber for South St. Pancras (Sir Julian Goldsmid) felt, as one standing in rather a difficult position on the present occasion. I am sure, however, that the House will on that account all the more hear patiently the few observations I have to make. Now, Sir, there is no doubt that the discussion of a matter which is really a question, or ought to be a question, of commercial arrangement between the companies and their customers, has been, by the prevailing excitement of the last few weeks, worked up into a form which was truly described by my hon. Friend who moved this Resolution as a crusade against the Railway Companies. Many hard things have been said. I cannot resent the hard sayings of my hon. Friend who has just sat down, and who has introduced himself so favourably to the notice of the House by his first appearance as a debater. He struck very vigorously against the Railway Companies. I will not use one word of recrimination or of discourtesy with respect to the President of the Board of Trade or to those permanent officials of that Department, for both the Railway Companies and the public have entire confidence in their impartiality. Further, I feel, in the present unfortunate condition of trade and agriculture, it is but natural that those who imagine themselves to be pressed hardly by the action of the Railway Companies should feel very keenly and bitterly any burden which they think is unnecessarily placed on them. But such feelings have arisen mainly from a misapprehension of the action of the Railway Companies; certainly there has been an entire misapprehension of their intentions. But I shall not go into that matter at length, because the announcement made by the President of the Board of Trade during Question time has put an entirely new complexion on this controversy, and has to a great extent deprived the Motion before the House of its pressing importance. The President of the Board of Trade stated to-day at Question time that it was his intention to appoint a Committee for the purpose, I understood, of inquiring into the working and results of the revisions of rates which have taken place, and inquiring whether any further steps



might be necessary. I can only say, speaking for the railway with which I am connected—the London and North Western—and I believe for all the great Railway Companies, we shall welcome that inquiry most heartily, and we are confident that it will have the effect of relieving us from a great deal of misapprehension which at present prevails upon this important subject. It also, to a certain extent, knocks the bottom out of the operative part of the Resolution which has been proposed. I do not know whether it will be pressed by my hon. Friend who introduced it, because I do not suppose the House of Commons is going to declare that the Railway Companies have been guilty of all the enormities which he charged them with, and proceed, further, to decide what legislation shall be taken in order to deprive them of the authority and power they have now of fixing their own rates. I do not think they will seriously urge that proposition in face of the inquiry that is to take place for the purpose of investigating these very charges, and of considering, I understand, what kind of legislation, if any, should follow. You have heard of hanging a man before he is tried; but to hang a man, and then, at a considerable distance of time after this operation, announce that you are going to institute a trial into his case, would be one of the most extraordinary propositions for this Assembly to adopt. The position of the London and North-Western Railway Company is stated in the letter which was published a few days ago by *The Times*, signed by Mr. Cawkwell, our Deputy Chairman. I wish to say a word or two following up what has been said by the Member for South St. Pancras. I regret that that letter was not sooner published.

MR. MUNDELLA: Why was it not?

\*MR. PLUNKET: I was myself in favour of publishing it, but I do not want to go into that. All I say is, that the policy embodied in that letter was the policy which had been resolved upon long before, but its publication was delayed for various reasons which I did not myself assent to. The case made by

*Mr. D. R. Plunket*

that letter is this: that in the vast majority of the cases in which exception is taken to the rates as they are now or have been, that exception is taken under a misapprehension; that it was for want of time that those rates which are most complained of were not then or have not since been set up in the position which they are intended permanently to occupy. Whether it was wise or not to adopt the course the great companies have done of starting their new rates upon the maximum instead of building up from the old rates I will not now discuss. But, as is well-known, all the great companies have pledged themselves in every case where the rate is revised to date back the revision of that rate to the 1st January. I desire to say a few words on a letter which has this day been sent to the Board of Trade, which will explain the views the London and North-Western Railway Company take upon one matter in which they happen to differ—as also does the Great Western—from the other great companies. As that letter will probably be published to-morrow, I should like at the same time that the explanation of our conduct should go forth and the grounds on which we acted should be stated. The letter says—

“It is understood that some of the companies, with a view of establishing a general principle of revision, have suggested that in no case should a rate be raised so as to exceed by more than 5 per cent. the corresponding rate prevailing in 1892. The North-Western Company, while concurring in any arrangement which would conduce to a fair and moderate course of dealing between the company and their customers, think that to lay down a hard-and-fast line would be neither practicable nor desirable in all cases. In some cases, where goods are of high value, such as £50 or £100 a ton, in addition to the rate of 1d. or 1½d. per hundredweight would, while amounting to a higher percentage, really not affect the cost of the article or provoke any opposition from the trader, while other traffic could not reasonably bear any increase even to the moderate extent named. Another objection is that such a suggestion would go far to nullify in many cases the uniformity and simplicity gained by the codification of the maximum powers of the company which has been the result of the prolonged labours of Parliament and the Board of Trade upon the subject, and the introduction of another standard would, in addition to, if not in substitution for, a reference to a few Acts of Parliament, involve individual reference to the many millions of actual rates existing in 1892, access to the records of which would, to the public, be difficult, if not impossible.”

Now let me say one word on the charge of bad faith so often alleged against the various companies. It is said that whereas they pledged themselves there would be no raising of the rates, in point of fact many of the rates have been raised, it is said that a pledge was given that there should be no raising of the rates. Well, if any such pledge was given, it must have been given in the sense that the whole result of the revision would not end in a raising of the rates, because at every period of the transactions between the companies and the public, before the Committee and before the Commission, again and again did they claim the right, in certain cases where it would be fair, to raise the rates, though not, of course, those which were to be lowered by force of Act of Parliament. On the other hand, the Board of Trade always seem to have contended that that must not be done upon any great scale, but that it might be done to a certain extent was certainly conceded. To show this I will read one short paragraph from the Report of Lord Balfour of Burleigh and Mr. Courtenay Boyle. On page 69 of that Report they say—

"In determining the figures in the Schedule we have had regard to the highness of the present non-competitive rates, and, on the other hand, to the fact that the companies will probably have to rely more on increase in traffic than on the raising of their non-competitive rates to recoup themselves from any loss they may sustain by deprivation of the right to charge specially high rates, as are now in some instances in force."

From this it is evident that increase in traffic was not the only way which was contemplated of recoupment. It was intended in certain cases that a raising of other rates might be permitted, though not to any far-reaching extent, and that was the view, I know, which was accepted at that time by the great Railway Companies. Now, one word more. It has been hinted here this afternoon that after all there have been no great remissions; no great reductions made by the Railway Companies in the previously existing rates. It is contended that it has been altogether a one-sided endeavour on the part of the

Railway Companies to raise the rates wherever they could. Unfortunately, at this moment I have not got by me the figures on this subject from my own railway, but I have here the figures which were sent the other day by the Great Western Railway to the Board of Trade. The officers of that company tell me that these figures only give a partial statement and illustration of the reductions made, but they say they have submitted to the President of the Board of Trade 33,000 specimen cases of the reduction of rates from 24 stations only, and that they have, since January last, arranged 872,864 exceptional rates, all far below the maximum charges which they are by law allowed to make. [Mr. MUNDILLA was understood to ask if they were below the charges of last year.] I understand that a great many of them are. There seems to be some misapprehension also as to what the loss to the great Railway Companies would really be if all the reductions following upon the Act of 1888 were to be enforced, and there was to be no recoupment by raising other rates. I can state confidently that as regards the London and North Western the net loss would not fall short of from £80,000 to £100,000 a year, and the Great Western authorise me to state that in their case the loss would be as great, if not greater.

\*Mr. DODD (Essex, Maldon) said that the Members representing agricultural constituencies had their drawers full of complaints from agriculturists in this matter. He recognised that it was because agriculture was in a depressed condition that the loudest complaints came from them, but complaints also came from commercial men. That there had been a large and important increase in the charges made by the Railway Companies was beyond dispute. There had been no misapprehension as to the figures—the bills sent in by the Railway Companies had been forwarded to Members by their constituents—but the Railway Companies were under a misapprehension when they thought the traders would bear the rates they put on. He would not weary the House with details, but would take one case—and that by no

means the worst—out of the large number that had been sent to him. He had a letter from a man who said he was dealing in pigs, the only thing any money could be made out of by farmers in these times. He stated that prior to the 1st January, 1893, he sent 10 pigs from Ely to Stratford and London for 10s., but the present rate was 22s. for five pigs. The writer wound up a practical, if not altogether grammatical letter, by saying he “had now discontinued sending pigs to London, though they were now in nice condition.” The same state of things occurred in almost every branch of agriculture. It was said that as the Railway Companies were about to meet the traders in a conciliatory way this Motion was unnecessary. He was sorry to say that from the letter of his friend, Sir Henry Oakley, he was not satisfied that the companies were going to meet the traders in this conciliatory way, for Sir Henry wrote that the companies were unable to accept without qualification the suggestions of the President of the Board of Trade. He submitted that the facts were sufficiently well-known to the House without any further Committee or Inquiry; and that when there was a dispute as to whether a rate was reasonable or not, it must be settled by some tribunal. They were all agreed that the Railway Commissioners were an impossible tribunal, but he suggested that they had in the Board of Trade a cheap and simple Body which would be able to act as arbitrators between the public and the Railway Companies when there was a dispute, and to settle what was a reasonable rate. They had recently had an Arbitration Act which provided a simple mode of enforcing awards when there was a dispute between private people. When the arbitrator made his award that award was enforced by the ordinary Courts just as if it was an order of the ordinary Courts, and he suggested that when the Board of Trade had made an Order deciding whether a rate was reasonable or unreasonable it should also be enforced by the ordinary Courts. This would be a simple and expeditious mode of dealing with the matter. They asked that this Motion should be adopted by the House so that the Board of Trade might deal directly, speedily, and cheaply with disputes

*Mr. Dodd*

between traders and the Railway Companies.

MR. MCNDELLA : I am very sorry to stand between the House and many hon. Members who wish to discuss this question. We have only three hours for the discussion—a very inadequate time certainly—and as my right hon. Friend opposite (Sir M. Hicks-Beach) will, I am sure, desire to follow me, I shall, therefore, detain the House but a very short time in order that I may not do him injustice. We need not go into the history of the question. The Act of 1888 and the work which was done by the Commission and the Joint Committee under that Act was of an excellent character, and was of the highest importance for the future dealing with this question. It is impossible to overestimate the skill and ability brought to bear by the Commissioners in the work they did in the revision and classification of the railway rates of this country. It was not a light task to get rid of more than 1,000 Acts of Parliament, all contradicting each other in the conclusions they arrived at, and to reduce the whole of the railway rates in this country into a Code in 35 Acts of Parliament. It is to be regretted that the Railway Companies, when called upon to publish their rate books, should have come to the resolution practically to claim the maximum charges. It is an unprecedented thing. I know that in doing so they claim to be within their rights; technically they are within their legal rights, but they have inflicted an amount of hardship and discouragement upon the traders of this country that I think they are now becoming fully alive to. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for the University of Dublin (Mr. Plunket), whom we are always glad to hear, made the very best case he could on behalf of the Railway Companies, and the hon. Baronet who has also spoken for the Railway Companies stated that the companies anticipated a storm, that they bowed to it, and that it passed over their heads. I could have wished that my right hon. Friend (Mr. Plunket) before he sat down would have announced that the London and North-Western was as

willing to be as liberal, even now, in its dealing with this question as many other Railway Companies had been. He has said that the London and North-Western and the Great Western were not willing to limit their increases, where increases were possible, within the limit of 5 per cent. But other great companies are willing to do so, and why should not the London and North-Western and the Great Western? The right hon. Gentleman spoke of the vast number of reductions made by the Great Western. But reductions of what? Reductions from the charges that were fixed in the rate books on the 1st January? And if they are those revised charges of to-day, are they as low as the charges of last year? Are they not very much higher than the charges of last year; and if they are, is it keeping faith with the public? Now, the understanding before the Commission was that there was to be no general raising of rates, and many traders and Trades Organisations withdrew all opposition from before the Commission and the Committee on the understanding given by the Railway Companies that their rates would not be touched. One Association—the Agricultural Traders Association, I believe—opposed the Railway Companies. The Railway Companies placated them, and said, “We are not going to interfere with you;” and on the understanding that their rates would not be raised, they withdrew their opposition. Now, however, they find that, after they have had their rates revised, they are subjected to an increased taxation of 6·61 per cent. by the Great Western and 8·33 by the London and North-Western. There is, therefore, some ground for some of the hard words that have been used in this controversy. My right hon. Friend spoke of the agitation having been worked up, and he said that nearly the whole of it was due to misapprehension. There is no doubt that some part of it is due to misapprehension, but on the whole it has not been a worked-up agitation. If the right hon. Gentleman was inside the Board of Trade for one day he would no longer believe that this was a manufactured agitation. We are inundated with complaints. And who are the complainants? Why, nearly all the Local Authorities of the Kingdom.

There have been great meetings of merchants in all the great centres, such as Manchester, Glasgow, Birmingham, &c., and these meetings of merchants and traders call upon us to come to their assistance and point out to us the mischief that would accrue to trade from the present state of things. It is the duty of the Board of Trade, of course, to do what it can to relieve traders from hardship, it was never intended, never anticipated, that they would be subjected to. Hon. Members have spoken of how certain traders will be affected by these rates. I have been told that in one trade alone—the grocers—if these rates are maintained, it would amount to something like a new impost of £500,000 a year. But I was never more interested and impressed than I was by a deputation representing market gardeners and small cultivators and hot-house cultivators from Essex, Bedfordshire, and various counties which waited upon me last Wednesday. Nothing is more satisfactory than the remarkable development which is going on—development of a most desirable kind—in this country, and the increase in the amount of land which is being brought into cultivation for vegetable produce and market gardening. There is nothing more striking than the amount of labour these businesses employ. One of the deputation said that he cultivated 500 acres of land, and paid £4,000 a year in labour; another said that he cultivated 90 acres and paid £1,000 a year in labour; another said he cultivated 120 acres and paid £3,800 a year in labour; and another said he cultivated six acres, mostly under glass, and he paid £1,000 a year in labour. And these men came to me in a state of thorough discouragement, not knowing what would eventually become of their trade owing to the enormous rates and the competition of foreign producers. The members of the deputation were affected very largely in respect of the increased cost of manure and every kind of fertiliser, and they complained of the increased charges. It is no use, therefore, thinking that this agitation is a fictitious one; it is a real and substantial impost upon industry and agriculture, but especially upon the small trades of the country. The House will hardly believe the immense burden and strain this agitation

has been on the Board of Trade since 2nd January. It has taxed the energies of every man in the Railway Department, and others have been brought in to assist the staff of that Department in discharging the duties cast upon it by the agitation, and, for my own part, nobody will be more glad than I to be rid of it. Now, I want to ask the House to let us deal with this question in a thoroughly practical spirit. I have been putting pressure upon the Railway Companies, and I have put as strongly in writing as I could what I was quite sure would be the inevitable result of a persistence in this policy on the part of the Railway Companies; and that if they did not reduce the rates, it would not be the Board of Trade that they would eventually have to deal with, but the House of Commons. I am glad to say I have had some indication that the Railway Companies are not quite so much banded together as they were a week ago. I have received letters from different companies—the London and Brighton, the Midland, the London and South Western, the Great Northern, the London and North Western, the Great Eastern, the North Eastern, and the Great Western.

COLONEL NOLAN (Galway, N.):  
Any from Ireland?

MR. MUNDELLA: No; none from Ireland yet; but we will deal with all railways on the same footing, I hope. [The right hon. Gentleman here read a letter he had received this day from the London and South Western Railway Company, which stated that strenuous efforts were being made to remove any cause of dissatisfaction. The Directors were fully determined that no action on their part should injuriously affect the public, and they had given instructions to their officers with regard to rates which were to remain at the figures in operation at the end of 1892, and as a general rule applicable to goods traffic, no increase should, unless in exceptional circumstances, exceed 5 per cent. on the old rate. The rates which had hitherto been below the ordinary level had been increased in order to recoup the company for losses.] Every one of these letters pledges the companies, except the Great

*Mr. Mundella*

Western and the London and North Western, that if they do in any case recoup themselves to any extent it shall never exceed 5 per cent.; and that whatever rebate is made, it shall date back to 1st January this year. Well, this is a very considerable concession which has been made by the Railway Companies, and some of them claim that it will not bring them back to the rates of last year, but that they will be considerable losers thereby. And now I will ask my hon. Friend the Member for Islington not to withdraw his Motion, because with this part of it I agree—

"To call attention to the subject of railway and canal rates and charges and the conditions of traffic; and to move that, in the opinion of this House, the revised railway rates, charges, and conditions of traffic are most prejudicial to the industries and agricultural and commercial interests of the Country, and this House urges upon the Government the necessity of dealing promptly and effectively with the subject."

I accept that part of the Resolution, and I hope the House will pass that portion of it unanimously. But the hon. Gentleman himself said that we must proceed safely and cautiously on this question. If we were to pass the whole of the Resolution to-night, what would be the effect? The effect would be that the companies would not proceed with their reductions; the whole matter would be thrown upon the Government the whole question of the reduction of rates would have to wait until such time as we could set up a new tribunal, and what the traders have a right to expect would be postponed indefinitely. We accept the Resolution of the hon. Gentleman up to that point; but the Railway Companies demand time to make their reductions, and I must say they have some claim in that respect. The House should not be ungenerous or vindictive. Let us give them the time they ask for to revise their rates, and then when we have seen the revision we can investigate the result, and, if necessary, proceed to deal more effectually with the whole question of railway rates. There is another reason why I ask this. Reference has been made by several speakers to the Railway Commission. The Railway Commission is probably the most expensive Court that was ever set up in this country. When traders

go into that Court they have to meet the combined Railway Companies with unlimited purses, and assisted as they are by the ablest counsel. Now, I think the time has come when we ought to consider whether we cannot re-constitute that tribunal, or make it more effective. I do appeal to my hon. Friend to let the House show a united front on this question by passing unanimously that part of the Resolution I have accepted. I do not think that any Member of this House charges the Department over which I have the honour to preside with any neglect of duty in this matter; and although we have not compulsory powers, if we are backed by a united House of Commons, the Railway Companies will not be too strong for us, whatever their policy may be.

\*SIR M. HICKS-BEACH (Bristol, W.): I entirely agree with the observations with which the right hon. Gentleman commenced his speech—that it is a misfortune, not only to the House but to the country, that this Debate has been curtailed within the limits of three hours. No subject can be of greater importance, no subject can more urgently require discussion. And I am convinced that if we had had a full evening for the Debate, such a voice would have gone out from all sides of the House of something more than discontent with what has been done by the great Railway Companies of this Kingdom as at any rate to convince them that they cannot safely abuse the powers given them by Parliament. The right hon. Gentleman has been good enough to say that he desired to leave some time for me to address the House. I certainly do not complain of the time he has taken up by his observations, for I do not wish to criticise anything he has said. What is the state of affairs before us? We have heard the case of the Railway Companies presented by two highly-skilled advocates—my right hon. Friend the Member for Dublin University and the hon. Member for South St. Pancras. They practically admitted the case of the hon. Member for Islington. They admitted that in the exercise of the powers which the Railway Companies possess under recent legislation they

had made a very serious mistake. The question that we are asked to-night to decide is what this House is to do. That appears to me to be a matter of very grave difficulty, and I think the right hon. Gentleman has been right in his view that we ought to content ourselves on this occasion with an affirmation of the mischief which has been done, and with distinctly throwing upon Her Majesty's Government the responsibility for promptly and effectively dealing with the matter, instead of attempting to indicate the precise manner in which it should be dealt with. Let me for a moment refer to the proposal of my hon. Friend the Member for Islington. What it amounts to is this: a reversal of the whole policy of Parliament in past years with reference to railway rates. The policy of Parliament in past years, from the very commencement of railway legislation, has been to fix maximum rates within which the Railway Companies might work by voluntarily dealing with traders, and not to fix the actual rates to be charged upon the railways. Under that system the whole of our great internal trade and commerce has grown up—especially through the special rates, settled, as hon. Members know, purely by voluntary arrangement between the two parties. What the Railway Companies have now done is this: They were compelled by Parliament to lower a certain number of their class rates; they have done so; they have raised others of their class rates, but they have abolished a very large proportion indeed of their special rates. I do not wish to apply a strong epithet to the able men who control our railways; but if I was talking about anybody else, I should say that no more foolish policy could be conceived than that adopted by the Railway Companies. Why they could not content themselves with raising some of the class rates, which they could have done, while they lowered others, and retaining the special rates as they were, to be revised, if revision was necessary, at their leisure, I have never been able to understand. My hon. Friend the Member for Islington proposes to give compulsory powers in some way or another to the Board of Trade, or an official appointed by the Board of Trade, to decide what shall be

the actual rates charged by the Railway Companies within their maximum powers. That is, as I have ventured to state to the House, an entire reversal of the policy which Parliament has hitherto pursued. It may be necessary; but, if so, it ought only to be adopted by the House after complete and exhaustive inquiry, and this House cannot be too careful in selecting the tribunal which shall be entrusted with such great issues, involving as they do millions of pounds—issues of the greatest importance not only to railway shareholders, but to the trade and commerce of this country. I think the right hon. Gentleman has taken a wise and prudent course in accepting the first half of the Resolution as a declaration by the House of its view of what has passed, and as making it binding upon Her Majesty's Government to deal promptly and effectively with the subject. I think he has also been wise in his proposal to appoint a Committee, which, I hope, will endeavour, in a business-like and practical spirit, to find some solution of a difficulty which has vexed and troubled trade throughout the length and breadth of the country.

Mr. W. A. HUNTER (Aberdeen, N.) said, he would trouble the House only for a moment in consequence of an observation which fell from the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Dublin University. The right hon. Gentleman stated that the Committee which was proposed would be a Committee to inquire into the results of the revision of maximum rates. He himself understood no such thing, and would be no party to any such inquiry. They had sufficient knowledge of the subject, and that portion of the Resolution which the Government had accepted pronounced a definitive judgment on that subject. As he understood, the only question which was to be referred to the Committee was the question which had been put by the late President of the Board of Trade, *i.e.*, the question of the remedy for the evil, which the Government acknowledged and which the first part of the Resolution declared. Upon that understanding he would earnestly recommend his hon. Friend to be content with the result of

*Sir M. Hicks-Beach*

the discussion, and to accept the offer which had been made by the Government.

COLONEL NOLAN (Galway, N.) said, he only wished to point out that Ireland had been very much neglected in this Debate, and he was very sorry to find that while the English Railway Companies were making overtures to the President of the Board of Trade, none of the Irish companies had done so. He quite agreed with the President of the Board of Trade that where there was a grievance they ought to leave the matter to him. He hoped the Motion would be withdrawn, and he also hoped that when the right hon. Gentleman came to regulate the matter he would not forget Ireland.

MR. J. JOICEY (Durham, Chester-le-Street) said, there were two classes of persons who had been interested in this discussion—the railway shareholders and the traders; but he regretted that there was not in the House a Representative directly connected with the workmen on the railways, because, after all, their interest was closely connected with the question of the fixing of rates. The important measure before the House for the shortening of the hours of railway servants, which he thought would be a most excellent thing to accomplish, would, to a large extent, affect the cost of the railways, and he hoped it would not be long before they had in this House a Representative of the railway workers.

MR. DUNBAR BARTON (Armagh, Mid) said, he only wished to detain the House for a moment in support of what the hon. Member for Galway had stated. He had that day received a telegram from the Lord Mayor of Dublin, the Chambers of Commerce of Dublin, Belfast, Cork, and Armagh, and the Mayor of Derry, asking him to bring before the House the fact that they deeply felt the injury to the trade of Ireland caused by the increase of rates, and he earnestly pressed upon the right hon. Gentleman the great grievances of Ireland in this respect which all parties suffered from.

MR. P. STANHOPE (Burnley) said, having had the advantage of following

this question for some years in this House, he might be permitted to say that both the late President of the Board of Trade and the present one had spoken in terms of so much satisfaction of the legislation of the late Parliament that he confessed he was rather amused to find them so sympathetic with the Motion by the House. While he accepted the unanimous verdict of the House, he must reserve his opinion and his complete liberty of action, and he hoped hon. Members would do the same, and not give away the case of the traders in consequence of the action of the Board of Trade.

\***SIR M. HICKS-BEACH** : May I say one word on the observations of the hon. Member in explanation? I have never at any time said that the Act of 1888 was intended to reduce the actual rates. What I have said was exactly what the right hon. Gentleman said to-night—namely, that it was intended to simplify the law, and enable traders easily to discover the maximum rates that could be charged.

\***MR. TOMLINSON** (Preston) asked whether the Railway Companies would be entitled to appear by counsel before the Committee, or whether it would be an ordinary Select Committee, who would take evidence in the usual way?

**MR. MUNDELLA**: Counsel will not appear before the Committee.

**SIR ALBERT ROLLIT**: The Debate has served a useful purpose; and after the statements from the two Front Benches and the promise of a Committee after Easter, I think I ought to be satisfied.

Question put, and negatived.

Question proposed, "That those words be there added."

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Amendment proposed,

To add after the word "That," in the Main Question, the words "in the opinion of this House, the revised railway rates, charges, and conditions of traffic are most prejudicial to the industries and agricultural and commercial interests of the Country, and this House urges upon the Government the necessity of dealing promptly and effectively with the subject."

Question, "That those words be there added," put, and agreed to.

Main Question, as amended, put, and agreed to.

Resolved, That, in the opinion of this House, the revised railway rates, charges, and conditions of traffic are most prejudicial to the industries and agricultural and commercial interests of the Country, and this House urges upon the Government the necessity of dealing promptly and effectively with the subject.

SUPPLY—Committee upon Monday next.

CHOLERA HOSPITAL (IRELAND) BILL.  
(No. 245.)

SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."—(*Mr. J. Morley.*)

Objection taken.

**COLONEL NOLAN**: I want to introduce some Amendments in Committee. I really hope the hon. Member will withdraw the objection.

\***MR. T. W. RUSSELL**: Perhaps the right hon. Gentleman will be good enough to tell us what the Bill is.

\***MR. J. MORLEY**: The Bill proposes to make certain changes, but its powers only extend over one year.

Objection withdrawn.

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a second time, and committed for Monday next.

PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO  
CHILDREN BILL.—(No. 134.)

SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."—(*Mr. J. A. Picton.*)

Objection taken.

**MR. PICTON**: The Bill contains no new principle, and I hope the hon. Member will not press his objection.

Objection withdrawn.



MR. ASQUITH : I hope the House will give a Second Reading to this Bill. There are a number of provisions, but I think the House generally approves of its principle.

Second Reading deferred till Monday next.

#### ALLOTMENTS AND SMALL HOLDINGS (PUBLIC AUTHORITIES) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Doidl, Bill to amend the Law relating to the hiring and purchase of land by Public Authorities in England and Wales for Allotments and Small Holdings, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Doidl, Mr. Arch, and Mr. Price.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 247.]

#### NAVAL MANŒUVRES.

Copy presented,—of Narrative of the Partial Mobilisation of the Fleet and the Manœuvres of 1892 [by Command] ; to lie upon the Table.

#### TRADE REPORTS (ANNUAL SERIES).

Copy presented,—of Diplomatic and Consular Reports on Trade and Finance, No. 1153 (Lorenzo Marques) [by Command] ; to lie upon the Table.

#### MISCELLANEOUS SERIES.

Copy presented,—of Reports on Subjects of General and Commercial Interest, Nos. 275 (Switzerland), 276 (Italy), and 277 (United States) [by Command] ; to lie upon the Table.

#### RAILWAYS ABANDONMENT.

Copies presented,—of Reports by the Board of Trade respecting the following Bills and their objects, viz. :—

- (1) Cork and Fermoy and Waterford and Wexford Railway Bill ;
- (2) Guiseley, Yeadon, and Headingley Railway (Abandonment) Bill ;

- (3) Midland and Great Northern Railway Companies (Eastern and Midlands Railway) Bill

[in pursuance of Standing Order 158A] ; Referred to the Committees on the Bills.

#### MESSAGE FROM THE LORDS.

That they have passed a Bill, intituled, "An Act to generalise and amend certain statutory provisions for the protection of persons acting in the execution of statutory and other public duties." [Public Authorities Protection Bill [Lords].

#### EAST INDIA (CONSUMPTION OF GANJA).

Return [presented 28th February] to be printed. [No. 97.]

#### PRIVATE BILL LEGISLATION (WALES AND MONMOUTHSHIRE (EXPENSES).

Return [presented 2nd March] to be printed. [No. 98.]

#### ECCLESIASTICAL COMMISSIONERS (METROPOLITAN LESSEES).

Return [presented 2nd March] to be printed. [No. 99.]

#### LOAN FUND BOARD (IRELAND).

Copy presented,—of Fifty-fifth Annual Report for 1892 [by Act] ; to lie upon the Table.

#### ECCLESIASTICAL COMMISSION.

Copy presented,—of Forty-fourth Report of the Commissioners, with Appendix [by Command] ; to lie upon the Table.

#### CONSOLIDATED FUND.

Abstract Account presented,—showing the Issues made from the Consolidated Fund of the United Kingdom in the year ended 31st March, 1892, for the Public Funded and Unfunded Debt, Civil List, &c., with the Report of the Controller and Auditor General thereon [by Act] ; to lie upon the Table.

House adjourned at five minutes after  
Twelve o'clock till Monday next,

## HOUSE OF LORDS,

*Monday, 6th March 1893.*

The Lord Scarsdale—Took the Oath.

SALE OF GOODS BILL [H. L.]—(No. 8.)

COMMITTEE.

House in Committee (according to Order).

THE LORD CHANCELLOR (Lord HERSCHELL): My Lords, there are a number of Amendments proposed by Lord Watson to this Bill to which I readily assent. The object is merely to put the Bill in exactly the same condition as that in which it was when it left your Lordships' House last Session, as regards its application to Scotland.

Amendment agreed to.

House resumed.

THE LORD CHANCELLOR: My Lords, this Bill has been passed through Standing Committee, and I therefore beg to move that the Standing Committee be negatived.

Moved, "That the Standing Committee be negatived." — (*The Lord Herschell.*)

Motion agreed to.

The Report of Amendments to be received on Thursday next.

TRADE UNION PROVIDENT FUNDS BILL—(No. 21.)

COMMITTEE.

House in Committee (according to Order): Bill reported without Amendment.

THE LORD CHANCELLOR: My Lords, this is a Money Bill, which has been sent on without Amendments to your Lordships' House, and, on that ground, I propose that the Standing Committee be negatived.

Moved, "That the Standing Committee be negatived." — (*The Lord Herschell.*)

Motion agreed to; Bill to be read 3<sup>a</sup> To-morrow.

VOL. IX. [FOURTH SERIES.]

## REPRESENTATIVE PEERS FOR IRELAND.

THE EARL OF DROGHEDA.

THE CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES (The Earl of MORLEY) moved—

"That the Petition of Ponsonby William Moore Earl of Drogheda in the Peerage of Ireland, claiming a right to vote at the elections of Representative Peers for Ireland (presented on Friday last), be referred to the Lord Chancellor to consider and report thereupon to the House."

Motion agreed to.

COINAGE (No. 2) BILL.

Brought from the Commons; read 1<sup>a</sup>; to be printed; and to be read 2<sup>a</sup> on Thursday next.—(*The Lord Kensington*) (No. 28.)"

House adjourned at twenty-five minutes before Five o'clock, till To-morrow, a quarter past Ten o'clock.

## HOUSE OF COMMONS,

*Monday, 6th March 1893.*

## NOTICE OF MOTION.

MR. POWELL WILLIAMS (Birmingham, S.): I beg to give notice that in Committee on the Registration of Electors (England and Wales) Bill I shall move that the qualifying period be six months ending the 24th of June each year.

## QUESTIONS.

## FLASHING LIGHTS AT SEA.

MR. LENG (Dundee): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether the attention of the Board has been called to the long period of the revolution or flashing of the lights on the coasts of Spain and Portugal, and especially to the recommendation of the recent Wreck Inquiry Court into the loss of the Anchor Liner *Roumania*, as to replacing the three minute Burling's light by a quick-flashing light; and whether

the Government will make representations to the Governments of Spain and Portugal on the subject ?

**THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE** (Mr. MUNDELLA, Sheffield, Brightside) : I have received the Report of the Court of Inquiry held on the loss of the *Roumania*, and have communicated to the Foreign Office the recommendation of the Court, with a view of representations being made to the Portuguese Government as to the desirability of altering the light on Burling's Island to a quick-flashing light of equal power to the present light.

#### SAILORS' INSURANCE.

**MR. LENG** : I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether his Department has information respecting successful methods of insuring the lives of the officers and crews of ships adopted by the Peninsular and Oriental and other large Shipping Companies in the United Kingdom ; and whether it has similar information with respect to any European Shipping Companies ; and, if so, whether he will lay upon the Table of the House a Memorandum embodying such information ?

**MR. MUNDELLA** : I regret to say that the Board of Trade have no authoritative details of the insurance schemes of Shipping Companies, British or Foreign, which would be serviceable to the House.

#### FOREIGN IMPORT TARIFFS.

**MR. J. W. LOWTHER** (Cumberland, Penrith) : I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether, since the issue in 1890 of the Return of the rates of import duties levied in European countries and the United States upon the produce and manufactures of the United Kingdom (Paper No. 376 of 1890), the tariffs of several countries—*e.g.*, Germany, France, Portugal, Spain, Italy, and Austria-Hungary, have been subjected to considerable alterations ; and whether, under these circumstances, he would be prepared to issue a fresh Return, in a similar or a more extended form, bringing the contents up to date ?

**MR. MUNDELLA** : It is true that there have been alterations recently in the tariffs of all these countries, and it is intended to issue a fresh tariff Return in

continuation of No. 376 of 1890 as soon as practicable ; but it must be remembered that the changes in Foreign and Colonial Tariffs are now published in considerable detail in the monthly numbers of the *Board of Trade Journal*, and copies of the full tariffs as translated by the International Tariffs Bureau Union are also supplied to all the Chambers of Commerce.

#### THE DRESDEN SANITARY CONFERENCE.

**MR. J. W. LOWTHER** : I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether Her Majesty's Government propose to take part in the forthcoming Sanitary Conference at Dresden ; at what date the Conference is expected to assemble ; and who will be the Representatives of Her Majesty's Government upon it ?

**\*THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS** (Sir E. GREY, Northumberland, Berwick) : Her Majesty's Government have consented to take part in the Conference referred to, which it is expected will meet on the 11th instant. The British Representatives will be Mr. Strachey, Her Majesty's Minister Resident at Dresden, and Dr. Thorne, the Medical Officer of the Local Government Board, assisted by Mr. Farnall of the Foreign Office.

#### FAIR RENTS IN COUNTY ARMAGH.

**MR. EDWARD M'HUGH** (Armagh, S.) : I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that the Sub-Commissioners visited the farm of Mary Hawthorne, Cavankill, County Armagh, on 6th March, 1891, for the purpose of inspecting the land with the view of valuing it for a fair rent ; and that, owing to the day being rainy, they informed the tenant, rather than let the map get wet, they would call again ; and that it is now two years and they have not returned nor has a judicial rent been yet fixed ; whether, seeing the delay has been caused by the Sub-Commissioners, he will take steps to prevent the execution of a decree for two years' rent till the judicial rent is fixed ; and will he see this is done without further delay ?

\*THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. J. MORLEY, Newcastle-upon-Tyne): It appears from a Report received from the Irish Land Commission that the application of Mary Hawthorne to have a fair rent fixed was first heard in July, 1889, and that the hearing was adjourned on her own application. The case was subsequently heard in April, 1891, but was adjourned in consequence of the death of the landlord, and of the necessity of serving amended notices. The Commissioners add that the case has again been listed for hearing before the Sub-Commission, which will commence its sittings at Newry on the 21st instant.

#### ELECTIONEERING IRREGULARITIES IN INVERNESS-SHIRE.

MR. CAMERON CORBETT (Glasgow, Tradeston): I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland if his attention has been called to the statements made in the *Scottish Highlander* of the 23rd February, that a blank form of nomination signed by two of the electors of the Benbecula Division was forwarded to Inverness, with a request that it should be made out in favour of Angus MacDonald, crofter, Benbecula, and that the name of Mr. John Cran was substituted without his authority; that Mr. MacDonald alleges that Mr. John Macleod, of the *Highland News*, was the gentleman to whom the letter was addressed; and that Crown Counsel who instructed an investigation to be made by the Criminal Authorities have, after consulting the Secretary for Scotland, come to the conclusion that in the whole circumstances no further proceedings should take place; and if the Mr. John Macleod, against whom the charge was made, has been appointed a member of the Deer Forests Commission?

\*THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. B. BALFOUR, Clackmanannan &c.): My right hon. Friend has asked me to answer this question. The material facts, as appearing from the papers reported to the Crown Office, are these: Mr. Angus MacDonald, Benbecula, early in November of last year, wrote to Mr. John Macleod asking him to become a candidate for the representation of the Benbecula Division of In-

verness-shire on the County Council, and Mr. Macleod replied that he was unable to accede to this request, but if Mr. MacDonald failed to get a candidate he (Mr. Macleod) might perhaps be able to find one at Inverness. Mr. Macleod afterwards telegraphed to Mr. MacDonald asking him, if he could not get a suitable candidate, to send to him (Mr. Macleod) a sheet of foolscap signed by two electors, the body being left blank. Mr. MacDonald accordingly obtained the signatures of two electors—Messrs. Bain and William MacDonald, and it appears that they signed on the understanding that Mr. Angus MacDonald was to be the candidate, but they had no communication with Mr. Macleod except through Mr. Angus MacDonald, who forwarded the nomination paper blank in the name of the candidate to Mr. Macleod, with a letter, no copy of which was kept. Mr. Angus MacDonald is under the impression that he told Mr. Macleod in that letter to fill up the form with his (Mr. MacDonald's) name, but he also states that he could not swear to the contents of the letter, or that he had distinctly instructed Mr. Macleod to fill up the paper with his name. Another person to whom the letter was shown had a similar impression as to its contents, but he also stated that he had not a distinct remembrance on the subject. I understand that it is the fact that Mr. Macleod directed Mr. Cran's name to be filled in as the candidate without Mr. Cran's authority. Mr. Angus MacDonald, after the election, wrote to Mr. Macleod as to what had taken place. Mr. Macleod replied, and Mr. Angus MacDonald states that he answered expressing himself satisfied with Mr. Macleod's explanation. Under these circumstances, it appeared to me that no ground for taking proceedings against Mr. Macleod had been established, and I directed accordingly. If I had thought that Mr. Macleod had become disqualified from continuing to sit upon the Deer Forests Commission, I should have brought the matter under the notice of my right hon. Friend the Secretary for Scotland, but I did not do so, as it did not seem to me that any such disqualification had arisen; and the matter never came before my right hon. Friend until the present question was put upon the Paper.

MR. A. SUTHERLAND (Sutherland): May I ask the right hon. Gentleman if he is aware that this is a trumped-up charge?

\*MR. SPEAKER: Order, order! That is clearly unparliamentary, and cannot be allowed. It is merely a matter of the opinion of the hon. Gentleman.

MR. J. B. BALFOUR: I can only say I have given the facts, and they carry with them their own explanation.

MR. PARKER SMITH (Lanark, Partick): I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland whether he is aware that, at the recent election for a County Councillor for the Kirkhill Division of the County of Inverness, there was a contest between a candidate who stood in the interests of the Highland Land League and a Mr. Cran; that pending that contest a blank nomination paper for the Benbecula Division was forwarded, duly signed by two electors, to Mr. John Macleod, of the *Highland News*, Inverness, with instructions to him to insert the name of Angus MacDonald, Benbecula, and lodge the same with the County Clerk; that Mr. John Macleod, in violation of his instructions, and without the knowledge or assent of any of the persons concerned, filled in the name of the said Mr. Cran, thereby securing his return unopposed as Councillor for Benbecula, in order to make certain the return of the Land League candidate for Kirkhill; whether the John Macleod who did this is the John Macleod who was recently appointed by him as a member of the Deer Forests Commission; and whether he proposes, under these circumstances, to retain his name on the Commission, or what action he proposes to take?

\*THE SECRETARY FOR SCOTLAND (Sir G. TREVELYAN, Glasgow, Bridgeton): The hon. Gentleman has narrated the facts. The only course I could adopt would be to recommend the Queen to remove Mr. Macleod's name from the Commission, and I do not consider that there is any adequate cause for taking such a step.

#### NON-COMBATANT OFFICERS.

CAPTAIN NAYLOR-LEYLAND (Colchester): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War, in view of the fact that squadron sergeant majors and squadron quartermaster sergeants in the Cavalry as regards

pay hold practically identical rank, and that the former is the most important combatant position of any non-commissioned officer in the Cavalry, and that both are liable to be passed over by non-commissioned officers holding non-combatant positions after three years' service in Class 17, could the authorities place the new squadron corporal or sergeant majors upon the same footing, so that after three years' service in Class 17 they might upon recommendation become as a matter of right first-class Staff sergeants in Class 16, which privilege would give them no increase of pay, but would prevent their being passed over by non-combatant juniors, and would give them a small increase in allowances and pension?

\*THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (Mr. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN, Stirling, &c.): The so-called non-combatant non-commissioned officers referred to are comparatively few in number, and it is relatively difficult to find qualified men who are willing to accept the position. Their promotion to Class 17, for allowances, is practically the only promotion to which they can look. The combatant non-commissioned officers have open to them the posts of regimental sergeant major and quartermaster sergeant, and it is not considered necessary to give them also time promotion to Class 17.

#### IRISH EVICTED TENANTS.

MR. WILLIAM REDMOND (Clare, E.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether the Government propose to introduce legislation this Session in the interest of the Irish evicted tenants?

\*MR. J. MORLEY: I can only say that at the present moment it would be premature to make a statement on this question.

#### ROAD CONSTRUCTION IN COUNTY DONEGAL.

SIR THOMAS LEA (Londonderry, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether the Congested Districts Board have arranged an extensive road construction in County Donegal; and whether it is intended to construct 34 miles of road at an expenditure of £10,000?

\***MR. J. MORLEY** : The Congested Districts Board have invited tenders for the construction of some new roads and the repair of certain existing roads in the County Donegal. The approximate length of the roads is 33 miles, and the estimated cost is £9,520.

#### WEATHER FORECASTS FOR LIFEBOAT STATIONS.

**SIR THOMAS LEA** : I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether application has been made by the Royal National Lifeboat Institution to the Meteorological Council of the Royal Society for the supply of daily forecasts to lifeboat stations on the coast ; whether such application was refused for lack of funds ; and whether the Government can supply the small additional grant for telegraphing daily to these stations ?

**SIR J. T. HIBBERT** : I am informed that the Meteorological Council was applied to, as stated, and declined owing to the cost. The Treasury have received no representations upon the subject, and they are therefore not in a position to deal with the question.

#### THE ROYAL IRISH CONSTABULARY FORCE FUND.

**SIR THOMAS ESMONDE** (Kerry, W.) : I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland if, in view of the coming changes in the relations between the Imperial Government and the Royal Irish Constabulary, he will take steps to have the Royal Irish Constabulary Force Fund wound up ?

**MR. JOHNSTON** (Belfast, S.) : I rise to Order. I wish to ask you, Mr. Speaker, if this question does not come within the Rule you have laid down as to not permitting questions relative to the details of the Home Rule Bill ?

\***MR. SPEAKER** : No ; I do not think it comes within that Rule, which applies only to the details of the Bill.

\***MR. J. MORLEY** : The Constabulary Force Fund consists of two branches, the reward branch and the benefit branch. Into the reward branch are paid portions of fines awarded by Magistrates, or which are otherwise payable, to the Constabulary, and from this branch rewards to members of the Force are paid. The disposal of such fines will, no doubt, in

the circumstances mentioned be a matter for the Irish Government. Respecting, however, the benefit branch of the fund, it has been decided that it shall not be wound up, but shall continue to exist until all its obligations to the families of present members of the fund (whether serving on pay or on pension) shall be fulfilled ; and to that end the funds of the benefit branch (including the sum of £150,000 voted by Parliament in 1890-91) and its actuarial concerns have been placed under the management of the National Debt Commissioners.

#### FOXES IN THE HIGHLANDS.

**MR. WEIR** (Ross and Cromarty) : I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland whether he is aware that deer forests in the Highlands are at the present time overrun with foxes, that crofters living in townships adjoining these forests suffer considerable loss in consequence, and what steps will be taken to deal with the matter ?

\***MR. CAMERON CORBETT** : Is it not the case that it is the general practice of the owners of deer forests to offer a reward for the destruction of foxes ; and are they not practically becoming extinct in other deer forests except those belonging to Mr. Winans ?

**SIR W. PEARCE** (Plymouth) : Is it not a fact that these mountain foxes subsist on grouse, ptarmigan, and blue hare ? Is there not in connection with all large deer forests an official known as the fox hunter, whose duty it is to hunt the fox in the summer time with terriers, and is the right hon. Gentleman aware of the fact that nothing disturbs deer stalking more than moving foxes ?

**SIR G. TREVELYAN** : My attention has been called to an article in *The Highland News* stating that the Master of Blantyre, Sir Kenneth Mackenzie, and between 80 and 90 proprietors, sheep-farmers, and others have signed an engagement binding themselves to use every possible means to destroy and keep down foxes. I have a private letter from a well-known and much-esteemed Highland proprietor, Mr. Duncan Darroch, in which he tells me that he and most of his neighbours give a bonus of 10s. a head for foxes and 5s. for cubs, and that the trapping is incessant and effective. There is no call for Government interference. For the information

of English County Members I may say there is only one pack of fox hunters north of the Forth.

\*MR. WEIR: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that recently three foxes were killed by passing trains between Auchnashellach and Strathcarron?

MR. TOMLINSON (Preston): Mr. Speaker. Is it in Order to introduce long narratives in the form of questions?

MR. WEIR: Will the right hon. Gentleman remit the gun licences of the crofters and cottars living in the vicinity of deer forests for a certain period, so that they may destroy these vermin?

\*MR. SPEAKER: Notice should be given of that question, unless the right hon. Gentleman is prepared to answer it now?

SIR G. TREVELYAN: I know that in all sheep-farming districts the question of foxes must be a serious one, but as we have clear information of a general local movement on the part of proprietors and farmers I think we may leave it to them to deal with this question.

#### THE APPOINTMENT OF SHERIFFS.

DR. M'DONNELL (Queen's Co., Leix): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he has received a resolution from the Grand Jury of the Queen's County calling for a change in the law relating to the appointment of Sheriffs, the gentleman appointed in that county having refused to serve; and whether he will consider the possibility of so altering the law or practice as to enable men having the confidence of the mass of the ratepayers to fill this office if men of the landed classes are unwilling to undertake it?

\*MR. J. MORLEY: The Government are alive to the great inconvenience attending the existing law in relation to the appointment, &c., of Sheriffs, and have agreed, in another place, to the appointment of a Select Committee to inquire into, and report upon, the question generally.

*Sir G. Trevelyan*

#### THE CASE OF W. P. ELSTON.

MR. KEARLEY (Devonport): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether W. P. Elston, late a smith in Devonport Dockyard, was correctly pensioned in February, 1878, his pension being computed upon a basis of the wages he was in receipt of five years prior to that date; or whether, in accordance with the terms of the Superannuation Act of 1859, he should have been pensioned upon the basis of his average emoluments of the three years preceding his discharge to pension; and whether a communication on the subject has been received by the Treasury from the Admiralty?

SIR J. T. HIBBERT: Elston's pension was properly calculated on the established rate of wages of the class in which he was serving at the date of his retirement in 1878. In the previous year he had returned from temporary employment at the Cape, for which he had received higher pay, but temporary emoluments are not included in the calculation of pension under the Superannuation Acts. A communication has been received by the Treasury from the Admiralty on the subject.

#### TARIFFS ON FOREIGN CONFECTIONERY.

MR. MACDONALD (Tower Hamlets, Bow): I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether the tariff duty of 2d. per lb. on the total weight of all cocoa or chocolate confectionery imported from France, Germany, and elsewhere has been, and is now being, paid; or whether it is the fact that contrary to 39 & 40 Vict. c. 35 the duty is imposed only upon an assumed per-centage of the dutiable article in the imported confectionery, and that the assumed per-centage takes no account of the great waste of the dutiable article in process of manufacture, which loss British manufacturers have to bear?

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Sir W. HARCOURT, Derby): In some cases, especially where the quantity of the dutiable article bears a small proportion to the total quantity of the confectionery, duty is charged only on the actual quantity of the dutiable article. This quantity, however, is not "assumed," but ascertained by analysis. This practice is held by the

Customs' authorities to be covered by the Act 39 & 40 Vict. c. 35. With regard to the last part of the question, I would point out that the British manufacturer, as a rule, pays duty only on the raw material, which is only half the duty on the manufactured article; so that he is probably at no disadvantage as compared with the foreigner.

#### CUSTOMS OFFICERS' GRIEVANCES.

**MR. CROMBIE** (Kincardineshire): I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether, in consequence of the inquiry made into the subject of Customs officers' salaries, in the Report on the same in the Treasury Minute of 24th March, 1891, the Customs officers are now placed at a greater advantage than the officers of Excise; and, if so, whether a similar inquiry will be made in the case of the latter?

**SIR W. HARCOURT**: On this subject, I must refer to an answer given by my Predecessor in Office on February 26, 1892. I am not of opinion that the Excise officers are placed at a disadvantage as compared with the Customs officers. In the last three years the case of the Excise officers has been carefully considered, and their salaries largely increased.

#### THE BODYKE SEIZURES.

**MR. WILLIAM REDMOND**: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether his attention has been called to the conflict between the police and people at Bodyke last week, when the Sheriff seized some cattle on the estate of Colonel O'Callaghan; whether he can state how many police were engaged upon the occasion, and whether it is true that they charged the people with clubbed guns; whether he is aware that the people of Bodyke find great difficulty in paying the judicial rents; and whether, to avoid further disturbance in this locality, the Government will introduce a short Bill for the revision of judicial rents in Ireland?

**MR. MACARTNEY** (Antrim, S.): Is it not a fact that in some of the cases the persons whose cattle were seized immediately paid the rents?

\***MR. J. MORLEY**: It is reported to me that a Sheriff's bailiff, protected by a party of 21 police, seized some cattle on the Bodyke estate on February 24;

there was some excitement on the occasion, but it is not true that the police charged the people with clubbed guns or otherwise. There seems to be no doubt that a large number of the tenants are unable to meet in full the demands of the landlord. In some cases, I do not know in how many, the tenants came and paid their rents immediately after the seizures were made; but I do not know upon what terms the settlements were made.

**MR. MACARTNEY**: Payment in full.

**MR. J. MORLEY**: With regard to the last paragraph of the question, I must refer the hon. Member to the answer I have given to it several times.

#### THE APPOINTMENT OF MAGISTRATES.

**MR. COHEN** (Islington, E.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he can inform the House whether, in considering the recommendations of Lord Lieutenants, it has been the practice of successive Lord Chancellors to inquire as to the political opinions of the gentlemen whose names are submitted to them for appointment as Justices of the Peace?

**THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT** (**MR. ASQUITH**, Fife, E.): I am not aware, and have no special means for ascertaining, what has been the practice of Lord Chancellors in the matter referred to.

#### THE WATERFORD HARBOUR BILL.

**MR. W. REDMOND**: I beg, on behalf of the hon. Member for Waterford, to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland (1) whether his attention has been drawn to a correspondence between the Waterford Board of Guardians and the Local Government Board as to the legal powers of the former Board to incur expense in opposing the Waterford Harbour Bill now before Parliament; (2) whether he is aware that this Bill would, if carried into law, inflict a loss upon the rates of about £500 per annum; (3) whether the attention of the Local Government Board has been directed to the case in the Court of Appeal, *The Queen v. White*, 14 Q.B.D. p. 358, in which it was held that poor rates of a parish in England might be applied in opposing a Bill injuriously affecting the parish; (4) and whether the law is different in this respect in



England and Ireland ; and, if so, are the Guardians of the Waterford Union powerless to protect the ratepayers from the loss involved in the Bill now before Parliament ?

\***MR. J. MORLEY** : (1) my attention has been drawn to the subject-matter of the first paragraph ; (2) but I am not aware that the Bill referred to would inflict the loss indicated. (3) The attention of the Local Government Board has been directed to the case quoted, and they doubt its application to the case now in question. (4) It cannot be inferred from that case that the law is different in England and Ireland. The matter, however, appears to be one in which the Guardians should be advised by their legal adviser.

#### HIRED MEN IN DOCKYARDS.

**MR. KNATCHBULL-HUGESSEN** (Kent, Faversham) : I beg to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty whether he is aware of the great dissatisfaction which exists among the hired men in Her Majesty's Dockyards owing to the fact that, in the event of a hired man being placed on the Establishment, none of the time he has worked, in some cases as much as 20 years, is counted for pension, and he forfeits besides the bonus he would have received had he remained on the hired list ; and whether he will take steps to remedy this grievance, and allow hired time to count for pension ?

**THE CIVIL LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY** (Mr. EDMUND ROBERTSON, son, Dundee) : The question is one of very many which are now under the consideration of the Admiralty in connection with an inquiry which has recently been held into the position of dockyard workmen. The decision upon it will form part of the general settlement which I hope may soon be arrived at.

#### IRISH ASSISTANT TEACHERS.

**SIR THOMAS ESMONDE** : I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland if the Commissioners of National Education will consider any case of special hardship to an assistant teacher which may arise in the application of the Rule as to the average attendance of children ?

\***MR. J. MORLEY** : The Commissioners invariably consider exceptional circumstances of a temporary nature in

applying the Rule as to the average prescribed for assistant teachers, so as to avoid special hardship to individuals.

#### VOIDED PATENTS.

**MR. LABOUCHERE** (Northampton) : I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether a statement of voided patents (including patent agents' fees on such voided patents) could be included in the Reports of the Comptroller General of Patents ?

**MR. MUNDELLA** : A statement of voided patents will for the future be included in the Reports of the Comptroller of Patents ; but the Comptroller has no means of ascertaining the amount of fees paid to agents in connection with such voided patents.

#### HYTHE SCHOOL OF MUSKETRY.

**MR. LABOUCHERE** : I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether an inquiry has been held at Hythe into the management of the School of Musketry there ; whether the Adjutant filled the offices of Paymaster, and Quartermaster, and President of the Sergeants' Mess ; whether it appeared in the inquiry that considerable profit was derived from the supply of pork, vegetables, and groceries to the Sergeants' Mess by the Adjutant ; whether, if so, these profits have been accounted for ; and whether, if not, any further action is to be taken in the matter ; and whether, at this inquiry, the accounts of ammunition supplied by the Quartermaster for the private use of officers and sergeants were investigated, and with what result ?

\***MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN** : An inquiry has been held at Hythe into certain irregularities which have occurred at the School of Musketry. It appeared from the inquiry that the Quartermaster had been allowed, contrary to Regulations, to manage the Sergeants' Mess. It was not proved that he made a profit ; but the whole proceedings were most irregular, and there was laxity in the way the accounts of the mess and those for ammunition issued on repayment were kept. In consequence of this, the Commandant had been censured ; the Quartermaster is to be removed ; and the School of Musketry, which has hitherto been independent of any District Command, has been placed, as regards discipline, under the direct supervision of

the General Officer Commanding the South-Eastern District.

#### SHERIFFS' SEIZURES AT NIGHT.

MR. CARSON (Dublin University): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he has withdrawn the Circular directing the refusal of police protection to Sheriffs at night in the execution of judgments of the Superior Courts, and which, in the case of "The Attorney General *v.* Kissans," was declared by the Queen's Bench Division in Ireland to be unconstitutional and illegal; and, if so, what are the terms of the Circular substituted therefor?

\*MR. J. MORLEY: The Circular referred to, which superseded the equally illegal Regulations which the present Government found in force, was at once withdrawn after the judgment in the Queen's Bench Division, though we regret, as did the Lord Chief Baron and Lord Justice Barry in the Court of Appeal, that there were no means of testing the legality of the Circular before a higher tribunal. I have the Circular here. I do not know if the hon. and learned Gentleman wishes it all read, or perhaps it will suffice if I read the words as to night protection.

MR. CARSON: Perhaps the right hon. Gentleman will let me see the Circular.

MR. J. MORLEY: Certainly.

MR. CARSON: And a copy of the former Circular, which he has repeatedly stated was illegal.

MR. J. MORLEY: It was illegal, because it undoubtedly authorised police protection at night in the case of seizures under civil bill decrees. I will gladly hand it to the hon. Gentleman.

#### RELIGIONS IN THE POST OFFICE.

MR. T. D. SULLIVAN (Donegal, W.): I beg to ask the Postmaster General whether he is aware that Catholic girls, sorters and clerks, in the Postal Order Department of the General Post Office, have been pressed to attend Protestant religious services or prayer meetings held within the precincts of the building, and that those who decline to attend such meetings are subjected to disfavour and injured in their chances of promotion for so doing; and whether such proceedings are to be regarded as having the sanction of the authorities?

MR. A. MORLEY: I am not aware of any pressure being applied to any of the staff of the Postal Order Branch to attend religious services, and there is no foundation whatever for the statement that those who decline to attend such meetings are subjected to disfavour, and injured in their chances of promotion for so doing. I am informed that the average number of attendances is 18 out of a force of 375.

#### IMPERIAL GRANTS FOR LOCAL PURPOSES.

MR. SEYMOUR KEAY (Elgin and Nairn): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury from what sources of revenue, for what local purposes, and under what enactments are certain Imperial resources applied as grants to the amount of £979,812 yearly, as shown in column six of the Return No. 134 of 1890?

SIR J. T. HIBBERT: The amount to which the hon. Member refers represents what was estimated to be the amount of sundry Parliamentary Grants in 1889-90 for Irish purposes, which, if necessary, were to constitute the ultimate security of the British taxpayer in connection with the advances in stock to Irish tenants. Those purposes are specified in the Land Act, 1891, Section 5 (1). The sums in question are voted by Parliament, and issued out of the Exchequer under the authority of the annual Appropriation Act.

#### PAUPERISM IN CALCUTTA.

MR. CAINE (Bradford, E.): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India if the attention of the Secretary of State has been given to sundry paragraphs in the last Administrative Report of Bengal on the serious amount of pauperism existing among the Eurasian communities of Calcutta and other large towns in Bengal; if it is true that the percentage of pauperism in these communities is 22·3 per cent.; and if he will consider the desirability of relieving this condition of things by creating an Eurasian regiment, which shall take the place of an European regiment, and the establishment of a training ship for Eurasian boys, to be stationed in the Hooghly river?

\*THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA (Mr. GEORGE RUSSELL, North Beds.): The paragraphs mentioned by my hon. Friend refer to Calcutta and its suburbs, where the percentage of Europeans and Eurasians reported to be in receipt of charitable relief is stated as in the question. It is within the knowledge of the Secretary of State that proposals for the formation of an Eurasian regiment and the establishment of a training ship for Eurasian boys have been considered by the Government of India and the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal, and, for what appear to be sufficient reasons, are not recommended by them. This being so, the Secretary of State does not propose to move in the matter.

#### OPIUM DENS IN INDIA.

MR. CAINE: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India if he has received the explanation of the Government of India with regard to the confidential Circular issued by the Government of the North-West Provinces with regard to opium smoking dens; and, if so, will he lay the Correspondence upon the Table of the House?

MR. GEORGE RUSSELL: Yes, Sir; the Papers will be laid on the Table if my hon. Friend will move for them.

#### HEALTH OF THE TROOPS IN INDIA.

MR. CAINE: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India what was the rate of admissions to hospital from venereal diseases per 1,000 of strength in the British and Native Armies in India for the year 1891-2, or the last under report?

\*MR. GEORGE RUSSELL: The rate of admissions to hospital from venereal diseases per 1,000 of strength in 1890 (the last year for which complete statistics have as yet been received) was British troops, 503·5; Native troops, 41·1.

#### ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS OF THE PROVINCES OF INDIA.

MR. CAINE: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India if he will cause the Administrative Reports of the various Provinces of British India to be placed in the Library of the House of Commons?

\*MR. GEORGE RUSSELL: Copies of the Administrative Reports of the several Indian Governments and Administrations used to be sent to the Library of the House of Commons, but this practice was discontinued after 1875-76, in consequence of representations received from the Librarian of the House of Commons as to the large amount of space which these books occupied. Copies of future Reports can, however, be supplied if there is any general wish to that effect.

#### LANCASHIRE MAGISTRATES.

MR. LEGH (Lancashire, S.W., Newton): I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he has submitted to the Lord Lieutenant of Lancashire a list of over 40 prominent Liberal politicians, with the request that they may be nominated County Magistrates; if there is any precedent for such action; and if he will lay upon the Table of the House the Memorandum of 1871, by which the nomination of County Magistrates was transferred from the Chancellor of the Duchy to the Lord Lieutenant?

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE DUCHY OF LANCASTER (Mr. BRYCE, Aberdeen, S.): Communications have passed between the Lord Lieutenant and myself upon the subject of nomination to the County Bench, but as these communications are not yet completed the time has not arrived when I can state their purport to the House. The suggestions as to facts contained in the hon. Member's question are not to be taken to be admitted as accurate. As I cannot at present state the nature of the communications which have passed, I cannot say anything about precedent. I have no objection to lay the Memorandum referred to upon the Table when the proper time arrives.

MR. LEGH: May I ask if a list of the prospective Magistrates was furnished by the Liberal agent in Lancashire?

MR. T. P. O'CONNOR (Liverpool, Scotland): I would ask if it is not the fact that for years past Liberals have been practically excluded from the Magistracy in Lancashire by the Lord Lieutenant?

MR. TOMLINSON (Preston): May I ask if there is any foundation whatever for the suggestion that the Lord Lieutenant is guided by political considerations in these appointments?

**Mr. BRYCE:** Seeing that I have to make a statement to the House on the subject shortly I think it would be better that I should reserve what I have to say in reply until then.

**Mr. LEGH:** I beg to give notice that I will call attention to this subject as soon as I get an opportunity.

#### JUSTICES IN ROSS AND CROMARTY.

**Mr. WEIR** (Ross and Cromarty): I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland whether Her Majesty's Government will take the necessary steps to remove from the roll of Justices of the Peace for Ross and Cromarty all persons who are not actual in-dwellers in the same shire, as required by the Scotch Act, 1587, c. 82?

**Sir G. TREVELYAN:** I have communicated with the authorities in Edinburgh, and have asked whether this Act is operative or obsolete. Perhaps the hon. Member will repeat the question on Thursday.

**Mr. WEIR:** I would ask whether the Secretary for Scotland is aware that the Lord Lieutenant for Ross and Cromarty admits that the selection of suitable persons to act as Justices of the Peace is a duty which, when the occasion for it arises, gives him a good deal of trouble, and involves him in some responsibility, and whether steps will be taken to relieve him in future of his responsibility and trouble when selecting names for recommendation to the Lord Chancellor?

**\*Mr. SPEAKER:** Order, order! What the hon. Member is asking is a part of the question which was struck out by the Clerks at the Table under my directions.

#### TELEGRAPHIC COMMUNICATION WITH ROSS AND CROMARTY.

**Mr. WEIR:** I beg to ask the Postmaster General whether it has been represented to him that the full sum demanded by the telegraph clerk at Hampstead Post Office for a duplicate telegram addressed to Balallan, Plockton, Ross-shire, and Balallan, Strome Ferry, Ross-shire, on the 4th ultimo was paid by the sender; that upwards of an hour and a half after handing in the telegram at the Hampstead Office an intimation was sent from that office to the sender, requesting payment of an additional fee

before the telegram would be delivered; why no explanation has been given by the Postmaster General to a communication on the subject; and whether he will make arrangements for the telegraphic business between London and Ross and Cromarty to receive better attention than hitherto?

**Mr. A. MORLEY:** The hon. Member apparently did not understand the explanation I gave him in my reply to his question on Thursday last. The telegrams were handed in by the hon. Member as what are known as multiple address telegrams for delivery from the same office; and payment was made on that hypothesis. The telegrams were, in fact, for delivery from two separate offices, and should have been paid for as two separate telegrams. A written explanation was on the point of being sent to the hon. Member when he put his previous question the other day, and I will give instructions that the statement shall be sent to him, so that he may be fully informed as to how the matter stands. I am not aware that there is any want of attention to the telegraph business between London and Ross and Cromarty.

**Mr. WEIR:** Is it not the fact that the full amount demanded by the telegraph official at the Hampstead Post Office was paid by the sender?

**Mr. A. MORLEY:** I do not think a demand was made. The telegram was sent with the money and taken in by the telegraphist, who was not aware that there were two different offices involved.

#### THE CHANNEL TUNNEL WORKS.

**Sir CHARLES DALRYMPLE** (Ipswich): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade what is the present condition of the Channel Tunnel works; and whether he will take steps to ascertain that progress is not made with the works, in contravention of the decision, and behind the back, of Parliament?

**Mr. MUNDELLA:** The Channel Tunnel works are inspected from time to time by an officer of the Board of Trade. I understand that there is no reason to believe that any progress has been made with them in breach of the injunction that has been granted.

## PERTSHIRE MAGISTRATES.

**DR. MACGREGOR** (Inverness-shire): I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland whether he will draw the attention of the Lord Chancellor to the facts that in Perthshire, out of 300 Justices of the Peace, only some 15 belong to the Liberal Party; and whether he will extend the proposed inquiry on the subject of the appointment of Magistrates to Scotland?

**SIR G. TREVELYAN**: I have no means of knowing the proportion of Magistrates in Perthshire belonging to the different Parties. If a Memorial from responsible persons in Perthshire or elsewhere is sent me, which appears proper in all respects to lay before the Lord Chancellor, I shall lay it; but such Memorials can be communicated by letter without the necessity for asking a question in the House of Commons. I may say that some Members of the House, and gentlemen outside, were under a mistaken impression in thinking that a Return had been given by the Home Office giving the politics of Justices of the Peace. The Return gives only the professions and callings of the Justices and the dates of their appointments, and I shall move a like Return for Scotland.

**MR. BARTLEY** (Islington, N.): Do you mean their professions of politics?

## UNPROTECTED GANTRIES.

**MR. GROVE** (West Ham, N.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether his attention has been called to an accident which occurred last week at Liverpool Street Station, by which a man met his death by falling from a gantry not protected by a rail; and whether it is legal to erect scaffolding above a certain height without sufficient protection; and, if it is, whether he will take steps to make such a practice penal?

**MR. ASQUITH**: I am making inquiries into this matter, but I must ask my hon. Friend to postpone his question for a day or two.

## CHANGE OF VENUE IN COUNTY CLARE.

**MR. MULHOLLAND** (Londonderry, N.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether

he can state in how many cases orders were made under the change of venue and special juries' clauses of "The Criminal Law and Procedure (Ireland) Act, 1887," in cases of crimes committed in the Counties of Clare, Limerick, and Kerry, from the passing of the Act down to the 21st August, 1892; how many of the said cases proceeded to trial, and in how many of them convictions were obtained?

**\*MR. J. MORLEY**: As regards the County of Clare, I am informed that the total number of offences specially reported to the Inspector General of Constabulary from August, 1886, to August, 1892, was 1,255, and that of these persons were made amenable in 282 cases only. Similar information is being prepared for the Counties of Limerick and Kerry, but it is not yet ready, and I would ask that the question be postponed for a day or two.

**MR. CARSON**: In how many cases where there was a change of venue were there convictions?

**MR. J. MORLEY**: There were 15 cases of change of venue out of 1,255 offences. These changes of venue appear to have affected 49 accused persons, and of these 34 are said to have been convicted.

**MR. MACARTNEY**: The right hon. Gentleman said in his answer "from August, 1886, to August, 1892." I do not know whether he said 1886 inadvertently?

**\*MR. J. MORLEY**: I used the word inadvertently. The Returns I have say from August, 1885, but it should be 1887.

## RAILWAY RATES ON THE GREAT NORTH OF SCOTLAND RAILWAY.

**MR. BUCHANAN** (Aberdeenshire, E.): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether his attention has been called to the new rates, particularly on grain, oil-cake, coal, and lime, charged by the Great North of Scotland Railway Company, which are seriously complained of by the agricultural community in Aberdeenshire; and whether the Great North of Scotland Railway Company is included in the Railway Companies Association, and will have to adopt the same reductions in their rates as the other Railway Companies?

**DR. FARQUHARSON** (Aberdeenshire, W.) : Has the right hon. Gentleman any cognizance of the resolutions passed by the traders in the North of Scotland complaining of the railway rates, and asking that they should be put on a more equitable footing ?

**MR. MUNDELLA** : I cannot answer the last question, as I have not had sufficient notice of it. A complaint as regards the new rates on grain, oil-cake, and coal proposed to be charged by the Great North of Scotland Railway Company has been laid before the Board of Trade. The Great North of Scotland Railway Company is included in the Railway Companies Association, and I am calling the attention of the Scotch and Irish Companies to the letters received from the principal English companies and asking for similar assurances as to reduction of rates.

**MR. BUCHANAN** : I would ask whether the right hon. Gentleman will insist upon a reduction of the rates in Scotland as well as in England ?

**MR. MUNDELLA** : We have no power to insist. We are dealing with that which has been voluntarily offered by the English Railway Companies.

\***MR. WEIR** : Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that the railway rate for a ton of rough castings from Arbroath to London is 41s. 8d. per ton at owner's risk, and 51s. 8d. at company's risk, or nearly 10s. per ton more than the cost of the raw material.

[No answer was given.]

#### SCHOOL ACCOMMODATION IN LIANSANTFFRAID-GLYN-CEIRIOG.

**MR. HERBERT ROBERTS** (Denbighshire, W.) : I beg to ask the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education whether his attention has been drawn to the case of Lliansantffraid-Glyn-Ceiriog, Denbighshire, in reference to school accommodation ; whether he is aware that the residents have frequently made representations to the Education Department as to the insufficiency of accommodation and inefficiency of the existing National School ; and that Her Majesty's Inspector, J. Morgan Owen, having been directed by the Department, reported that the present school answered the requirements of the neighbourhood ; whether, after a recent inquiry

by Her Majesty's Chief Inspector into the case, Her Majesty's Inspector T. Morgan Owen's Report was overruled, and an additional school declared by the Department to be necessary for the village of Glyn ; and whether he will take steps to prevent such Reports as that recently over-ruled being made to the Department in future ?

**MR. ACLAND** : My attention has been drawn to this case. The first representation from residents as to an insufficiency of school accommodation reached the Department last May. Investigation was then directed, and Mr. Morgan Owen reported that, in his opinion, an enlargement of the National School would meet the case. The School Board were dissatisfied with his Report, and thereupon the Chief Inspector for Wales was sent to make special inquiry. On his Report the Department have sanctioned the provision by the Board of a new school for 120 or 130 children for the village of Glyn. It is impossible to prevent such differences of opinion, as these Reports indicate, from arising from time to time ; but where, as in this case, doubts arise as to the correctness of an Inspector's opinion, the Department will take steps to obtain a further opinion from the Chief Inspector.

#### CLAIMS FOR MALICIOUS INJURIES IN COUNTY CLARE.

**MR. CARSON** (Dublin University) : I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland how many claims for compensation for malicious injuries to property were made to the Grand Jury of the County of Clare at the recent Spring Assizes for the same county ; and how many of such claims were acceded to ?

\***MR. J. MORLEY** : The Constabulary Authorities inform me that 28 such claims were made at the recent Clare Assizes, all of which were acceded to. At the Spring Assizes of 1892 38 claims were made and 37 were allowed.

#### THE LIMERICK WATER BAILIFFS.

**MR. P. J. O'BRIEN** (Tipperary, N.) : I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that the Limerick Board of Conservators permit their head water bailiffs to distribute rod and net licences along

the River Shannon, to the neglect of their other duties, although the Board pay a considerable sum yearly to a chief distributor of licences for performing that duty; if so, will the practice be discontinued, and an order made for the head bailiffs to devote all their time to the watching of the main river and its tributaries; and whether he is also aware that the Board at Limerick had neglected to collect a sum of £80 net licence duty on the lower Shannon last season; and, if so, will the Irish Fishery Inspectors be instructed to surcharge the Conservators with the amount?

**\*MR. J. MORLEY:** The Inspectors of Fisheries inform me that they have no knowledge of the arrangements that may be made by the Limerick Board of Conservators for the distribution of rod and net licences, or for the performance of their duties by water bailiffs. The Inspectors have no power to interfere in these matters, or to surcharge the Conservators as suggested.

#### THE CASE OF SHIP'S CORPORAL D. J. WALDRON.

**MR. BENN** (Tower Hamlets, St. George's): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty whether Ship's Corporal D. J. Waldron, of H.M.S. *Northampton*, was placed under arrest for 16 days, reduced in rank, and deprived of one good-conduct badge for alleged "insolent conduct" to a person unknown to him, dressed as a civilian (but who afterwards proved to be the complainant, a Colonel), who endeavoured to precede him in getting a ticket at the Bluetown Railway Station on December 2nd last; and whether, in view of the fact that the officer was not in uniform, and was unknown to Waldron, he will cause the case to be re-considered?

**MR. EDMUND ROBERTSON:** Waldron was not placed under arrest, he was suspended from duty from December 9th (the date of investigation of the offence) to December 17th (the date of punishment being awarded). He was on probation as a ship's corporal. Men taken from the Marines for this duty have to serve two years' probation, and their final acceptance depends upon their behaviour while on probation, and whether they are specially recommended by their Captain. It was considered that Waldron's behaviour on this occasion

rendered him unfit for a position in which special discretion was required, and he was consequently ordered to revert to his original position as a gunner in the Royal Marine Artillery. His conduct was investigated, in accordance with the Regulations of the Service, in the presence of the accuser and accused and of the witnesses, the charge was considered fully proved, and he was summarily punished by the deprivation of a good conduct badge, which, however, he can regain by six months' continuous good conduct. Had the complainant been a civilian, the offence against good order and naval discipline would have been the same, and would have been similarly punished.

#### THE REV. FATHER HUMPHREYS.

**MR. T. W. RUSSELL** (Tyrone, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether the report in the newspapers is correct, to the effect that a prosecution against the Rev. Father Humphreys of New Tipperary, which was directed by the Law Officers of the late Government and in reference to which he was returned for trial since the present Government came into Office, has been withdrawn; and if he can state the reasons for this course of action?

**\*MR. J. MORLEY:** The prosecution against the Rev. Mr. Humphreys and a large number of other persons was directed by the late Government and arose out of an election affray, in which no serious injury of any kind was done to either person or property. The summonses in all the cases, including that against Father Humphreys, were pending when the present Government came into Office, and in the ordinary course proceeded and were not stayed. The local responsible authorities reported that, as complete peace and harmony had been restored, the peace of the district would best be consulted by withdrawing the proceedings, which was accordingly done.

#### THE CASE OF PATRICK DOORLEY.

**MR. T. W. RUSSELL:** I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether his attention has been drawn to the case of Patrick Doorley, who was tried at the Summer Assizes in King's County for firing into

the house of Patrick Nolan, a caretaker of an evicted farm, on 27th February, 1892, with the result that the jury disagreed; whether he is aware that additional evidence having been secured Doorley was, by direction of the Law Officers of the late Government, again sent for trial at the Spring Assizes, when the Law Officers of the Crown directed a *nolle prosequi* to be entered, although Crown summonses were served in the case and maps of the scene of the outrage made; and if he can state the reasons for the Crown procedure in this case?

\*MR. J. MORLEY: My attention has been drawn to the case mentioned. It was referred to, I believe, by the Leader of the Opposition the other night. On the occasion of the trial of the prisoner before a special jury at the Summer Assizes of 1892 the jury disagreed. No additional evidence was since obtained, nor was a second trial directed by the Law Officers of the late Government. The papers in this case came before the present Attorney General on the eve of the opening of the Assizes, and he directed a prosecution in the ordinary course, the accused being then out on bail. When the Attorney General returned to Dublin the chief Crown Solicitor drew his attention to the proceedings at the trial, when the Judge charged in favour of an acquittal, and then the Attorney General decided not to proceed.

MR. T. W. RUSSELL asked whether the right hon. Gentleman was certain that two new witnesses had not been found, that maps had not been prepared, and that Crown summonses issued for a new trial?

\*MR. J. MORLEY said, Crown summonses were issued in accordance with the decision to which the Attorney General had arrived while in London, and before he had consulted the chief Crown Solicitor in Dublin. He (Mr. Morley) was assured—and, as far as his information went, he was confident—that no new evidence was in the possession of the late Government; and certainly no new evidence had come into the possession of the present Government.

MR. T. W. RUSSELL gave notice that, on the Estimates, he would call attention to this matter.

MR. W. REDMOND asked the Chief Secretary whether his attention had been called to the address of the Lord Chief

Justice at the Assizes for King's County, in which his Lordship congratulated the Grand Jury on the satisfactory condition of the county, and the great decrease in serious crime?

MR. J. MORLEY signified assent.

#### CASE OF BOYCOTTING IN SLIGO.

MR. T. W. RUSSELL: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether it has been brought under his notice that a trader in Sligo has been severely boycotted, owing to his having evicted a tenant for the non-payment of several years' rent; whether he is aware that two Members of Parliament attended at Sligo and recommended this gentleman to the consideration of his fellow-countrymen; and whether, on this man's trade being seriously affected, he appealed for protection; and will he explain on what grounds he declined to accede to this appeal, and informed him that, if the Criminal Law had been broken, he had his remedy?

MR. P. A. M'HUGH (Leitrim, N.) asked whether it was true that the Lord Chief Justice congratulated the Grand Jurors of Sligo on the peaceful condition of the county; and whether, in reference to the boycotting of a Mr. Campbell, he stated that the offence was trivial, and its effect only transitory?

MR. CARSON: Before the right hon. Gentleman answers, I would ask him whether his attention has been called to the Charge of the Lord Chief Justice of Ireland at the Assizes; whether the learned Judge stated that now in the Returns before him there was no case of intimidation on the official record, or of boycotting, of conspiracy to boycott, or of unlawful assembly; and whether the case referred to in the question of the hon. Member was put on the record laid before the Lord Chief Justice or not?

\*MR. J. MORLEY: I cannot answer the last question. I had better describe the case referred to in the question. I presume the trader referred to is Mr. Harper Campbell, of Sligo. It is not a fact that he has been severely boycotted for having evicted a tenant of his named Catherine M'Donagh for the non-payment of rent. Some farmers of the locality did undoubtedly cease to call on him for coal, but this only lasted for a very short time, and has long since passed away.



In answer to the second paragraph of the question, I am aware that two Members of Parliament did, at a meeting held at Carhownagh on December 11 last, make use of language concerning the action of the landlord, which language is, in my opinion, in the highest degree reprehensible. The matter came before the Attorney General, who advised that the case was one in which the individual aggrieved should himself proceed to put the Criminal Law in force by summons or by information. It is quite true that the case did not appear in the official record laid before the Lord Chief Justice at the Sligo Assizes. The County Inspector says that as the effects of the partial interruption of business or boycotting had entirely passed away he did not include the case in the Returns. Of course, the official records are the basis upon which Judges rest their Charges. Referring to the case, the learned Judge said that, as the effect of the action taken with reference to Mr. Campbell was only slight and temporary, he assumed that the matter was trivial. He added that he was anxious to address to the Grand Jury his unqualified congratulations on the condition of the county.

MR. CARSON asked how it was that this case of boycotting was never put on the record; and, also, whether Mr. Campbell informed the Executive that he had lost a number of customers in Sligo town and neighbourhood, but that some small ones had returned since the cessation of the boycotting notices?

MR. T. W. RUSSELL asked whether Members of the House of Commons were to be allowed to go to Sligo and use "reprehensible language"—to use the right hon. Gentleman's own words—against a trader, leading to an interference with his trade, and that the authorities should then tell the trader that he must look after himself?

MR. T. P. O'CONNOR asked whether the Chief Secretary would take the precaution to have reported language that might turn out to be reprehensible which might be used by Members of both Houses when visiting Belfast?

\*MR. J. MORLEY: The hon. Member (Mr. T. W. Russell) must see that if Members of the House use language which is reprehensible, in or out of the House, they are responsible for what

they say. As to the point of the hon. and learned Gentleman, this case, I presume, was not put upon the record of cases of partial or complete boycotting for the reason which the County Inspector gave to the learned Judge—namely, that the matter was trivial, and that its effects passed away in a very short time.

MR. W. JOHNSTON: Will the right hon. Gentleman give the names of the two Members of Parliament?

[No answer was given.]

MR. JORDAN (Meath, S.): Is not Mr. Campbell of Sligo a large wholesale miller, whose trade does not depend on local traders?

[No answer was given.]

#### SUPERINTENDENTS OF MERCANTILE MARINE OFFICES.

MAJOR RASCH (Essex, S.E.): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether, having regard to the judicial powers possessed by Superintendents of the Mercantile Marine Offices under the Merchant Shipping Acts, in settling disputes and other questions affecting shipowners, shipmasters, and seamen, and for the purpose of increasing the usefulness of those offices as tribunals of the first instance, he is prepared to consider the desirability of satisfying his Department, by a test examination or otherwise, that the holders of these appointments shall, for the future, possess a competent knowledge of the shipping statutes; whether any of the present Superintendents of the Mercantile Marine Offices have ever been examined by the Civil Service Commissioners, and how many have entered the service of the Board of Trade without any test whatever; what is the number of Superintendents and Deputy Superintendents discharging superior duties in the Mercantile Marine Offices who have passed the limit of 65 years, at which the Treasury enforce retirement in other Departments; and what is the principle usually governing promotion in the case of members of the clerical staff of the Mercantile Marine Offices, and if individual merit and exceptional efficiency receive recognition in filling up the higher appointments, as in other branches of the Civil Service?

**MR. MUNDELLA :** There is no reason to doubt the competence of the Superintendents of Mercantile Marine Offices to discharge the duties now entrusted to them, and I am not of opinion that any special examination would tend to increase their competence. The Superintendents and Deputy Superintendents are :—(1) Under the Local Marine Boards ; (2) under the Board of Trade ; and (3) under the Commissioners of Customs. All those in Class (3) and a few under (1) and (2) have been examined by the Civil Service Commissioners. The number of Superintendents and Deputy Superintendents over 65 years of age is two. Individual merit and exceptional efficiency do receive recognition in determining questions of promotion ; but in the majority of cases the promotions do not rest with the Board of Trade.

#### THE ORDNANCE SURVEY.

**MR. PARKER SMITH (Lanark, Partick) :** I beg to ask the President of the Board of Agriculture whether he will see that the Report of the recent Committee on the Ordnance Survey is presented to the House before the discussion on the Stationery Vote in the Supplementary Estimates ?

**THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF AGRICULTURE (Mr. GARDNER, Essex, Saffron Walden) :** I have ascertained from the Stationery Office that the Report of the Ordnance Survey Committee was delivered to the Vote Office this morning, and copies may be obtained on application.

#### THE CLOSE TIME FOR SALMON IN COUNTY LOUTH.

**DR. AMBROSE (Louth, S.) :** I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury if the persons who signed the application to the Inspectors of Irish Fisheries to alter the close time or season for salmon on the coast of the County Louth, on which the Inspectors held a meeting at Castlebellingham on the 18th October, 1892, and afterwards made an Order on the 18th November, 1892, altering the season, defrayed the expenses of such application and all proceedings consequent thereon, as provided by the 33rd section, 5 and 6 Vic., c. 106 ; and, if so, what was the amount defrayed by them,

and what was the amount of the expenses incurred by the Inspectors consequent on the proceedings ?

**MR. J. MORLEY :** The Inspectors of Fisheries report that, in accordance with the usual practice, the persons who made the application referred to did not contribute to the expenses of the inquiry. The inquiry was taken with others, and the proportion of expenses fairly chargeable thereto would be about £4.

#### INSTRUCTION IN NAVAL TACTICS.

**MR. GIBSON BOWLES (Lynn Regis) :** I beg to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty whether there is in existence at any naval port any school or system of practical instruction in naval tactics ; and, if not, whether he will arrange for the establishment at one of the ports of such a school whereby, in addition to lectures on tactics, opportunities would be afforded to naval officers of practical work at tactics ?

**SIR U. KAY-SHUTTLEWORTH :** There is no special school of Naval tactics at the ports, and in view of the demands on 'naval officers' time there is no present intention of instituting one. It is considered that active service in the Fleet is the proper school of naval tactics.

#### THE HOWE COURT MARTIAL.

**MR. GIBSON BOWLES :** I beg to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty whether he can state whose duty it was to array the case and to determine what evidence should be offered to the Court at the first *Howe* court martial in support of the charges brought against Captain Hastings and Commander Dickson ; and whose duty it was to secure the eliciting of the whole of the facts by cross-examination when necessary ?

**MR. EDMUND ROBERTSON :** The whole of the duties referred to devolved upon the Court.

**CAPTAIN BETHELL** asked whether it was customary in cases of court martial initiated by the Admiralty to appoint a prosecutor ?

**SIR U. KAY-SHUTTLEWORTH :** In many cases a prosecutor has been appointed ; but in other cases there has been no prosecutor.

**MR. GIBSON BOWLES :** In the case of the *Howe* court martial was not Mr. Martin the prosecutor ?

**SIR U. KAY-SHUTTLEWORTH :** No ; he was Judge Advocate. There was no prosecutor.

#### SHIPS' SIDE-LIGHTS.

**MR. GIBSON BOWLES :** On behalf of my noble Friend the Member for Birkenhead (Viscount Bury), I beg to ask the Attorney General whether compliance by British shipowners with the Order in Council recently issued as to the screening of ships' side-lights will expose such shipowners to the risk of being found to blame and mulcted in damages in any suit brought against them in the Courts of foreign countries parties to the International Regulations for preventing collisions at sea, when the question of side-lights is involved ?

**\*THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Sir C. RUSSELL, Hackney, S.) :** The naval advisers of the Board of Trade are of opinion that the Order in Council referred to is explanatory merely, and makes no alteration in the International Regulations for preventing collisions at sea.

**MR. GIBSON BOWLES :** On behalf of my hon. Friend the Member for the Kirkdale Division of Liverpool (Sir G. Baden-Powell), I beg to ask the Attorney General, in regard to the screening of side-lights by sea-going vessels, whether foreign vessels are at present legally bound by the International Regulations to screen their side lights so that the rays shall not cross the line of the ship's keel projected ahead of the slings ; whether British vessels are at present legally bound by the new Order in Council to screen their side-lights so that the rays shall cross the line of the ship's keel projected ahead of the slings ; and in the event of collision between a British and foreign vessel in which the question of side-lights was involved, which of the two Codes of Regulations would be held to prevail in British and Foreign Courts respectively ?

**\*SIR CHARLES RUSSELL :** To the first question the answer is, No ; to the second question the answer (subject to my previous reply given just now) is, Yes ; to the third question the answer is that there are not two Codes of Regulations.

#### DR. COLLINS.

**MR. LABOUCHERE (Northampton) :** I beg to ask the Attorney General whether, in view of the fact that Dr.

Collins recently pleaded guilty to a charge of forgery at the Central Criminal Court, and was released on his own recognizances to come up for judgment when called upon, it is intended to call upon him to come up for judgment ; and, if so, when ?

**SIR CHARLES RUSSELL :** In answer to the question of my hon. Friend in reference to the remarkable decision of the late Common Serjeant (Sir William Charley), I have only to say, in the first place, that when a prisoner is discharged upon his own recognizances to come up for judgment when called upon, it is not usual to call upon the prisoner to come up for judgment except in case of subsequent misconduct ; and, in the next place, I have no reason to believe that there is any intention to call upon Dr. Collins to come up for judgment. But as to the latter point, I have no better information than my hon. Friend.

#### THE CAMP AT COLCHESTER.

**CAPTAIN NAYLOR-LEYLAND (Colchester) :** I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War on whose Report did the Government decide to rebuild a third only of the Camp at Colchester ; whom the information came from that influenced their decision ; will he lay a copy of that information upon the Table ; and have the Government any reason to believe that the two-thirds they are not rebuilding is in any better condition than the third they are ?

**\*MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN :** Funds were only available to rebuild one-third of the Camp ; and, though there is not very much difference in the state of the buildings, the third part, which seemed on the whole to be in the worst condition, was selected for re-construction.

#### NONCONFORMIST SCHOOL CHILDREN AT MONMOUTH.

**MR. SPICER (Monmouth, &c.) :** I beg to ask the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education whether it is in accordance with the terms of the Education Act that Nonconformist children, attending the St. Mary's National School of Monmouth, should be taken to church during school hours in Lent, when the parents have requested they should not be taken ?

THE VICE PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL (Mr. A. ACLAND, York, W.R., Rotherham): The Department have received no information from the locality with regard to the facts alleged. But if the children are taken to or kept at church during any part of the time set apart in the time-table for secular instruction this is a contravention of the Education Acts, and entirely inadmissible.

MR. SPICER: Will the right hon. Gentleman give notice that the system must be stopped?

MR. ACLAND: If I discover that the Act has been contravened I will give notice to have it stopped.

#### BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE.

LORD G. HAMILTON (Middlesex, Ealing): I wish to put a question of which I have given private notice to the Financial Secretary to the Admiralty. I regret the shortness of the notice, but I have been compelled to give short notice in consequence of the Motion which is to be made by the Chancellor of the Exchequer without notice to terminate the Naval Debate to-night. I wish to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty, with a view to showing the character and dimensions of the Debate of this evening, whether the cost of the new shipbuilding scheme to be introduced to the House to-night does not approximate, independently of the cost of armament, to some £5,000,000; and whether there is any modern precedent for the House being asked to sanction such an expenditure before we are in full possession of the dimensions, speed, armour, and armaments of the respective vessels comprised in the scheme?

SIR W. HARCOURT: I should like to answer the question. I have made inquiry upon the subject, and I find that since the year 1880—that is to say, for 13 years—there has never been but one instance in which the first Vote of the Navy Estimates has taken more than one night.

LORD G. HAMILTON: I want to know whether my statement is correct, that this expenditure, which is independent of armaments, approximates to £5,000,000; and whether, under these circumstances, the Chancellor of the Exchequer wishes to persevere with his ill-advised Motion?

SIR W. HARCOURT: I have not looked into the question of amounts, but I do not think that under the late Administration the amounts asked for were small. I find that, with the exception of 1886, which was also the year in which the Home Rule Bill was introduced, only one night has been taken for the first Vote. I do not think that that particular occasion was signalised by any large amount of money voted. The Government only ask by the Motion for to-night to be enabled to dispose of the first Navy Vote. I mention this because there is some idea that we intend to extend it to other Votes. We intend that if by going on for a short time after 12 o'clock we could get the Vote we should not be prevented by the Twelve o'clock Rule from doing so. That is our only intention in putting down the Motion.

LORD G. HAMILTON: May I ask the right hon. Gentleman if he is aware that the only large Shipbuilding Vote proposed by the late Government was embodied in a Bill which occupied at the very least ten days, independently of the discussion of the Estimates?

MR. A. O'CONNOR (Donegal, E.): May I ask whether, as a matter of fact, any money was included in the first Vote for construction?

SIR W. HARCOURT: I believe that is the fact, and I think that disposes of the noble Lord's question.

LORD G. HAMILTON: Will the right hon. Gentleman undertake that, until the Dockyard Vote is taken, no money shall be spent on new construction?

SIR W. HARCOURT indicated dissent.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: As I understand, the right hon. Gentleman, in spite of the wording of his Motion, does not propose to deal to-night with the Supplementary Estimates after 12 o'clock, but he does intend to insist upon having the Navy Vote. I do not think the right hon. Gentleman has rightly apprehended my noble Friend's point. The difficulty we are in is this: We desire the explanation of the Government of their important shipbuilding programme. It has been the custom in this House to discuss the Government's naval policy upon the first Vote brought forward before Easter. In that policy the most important element this year is the large

Vote of £5,000,000 for construction. We have not the information which it is usual to give, and in the absence of it it is impossible to discuss the Vote. Bearing in mind that the Government's Predecessors used to give before the discussion of the Estimates an elaborate Memorandum explaining and justifying their policy, I ask the right hon. Gentleman, keeping in view the meagre character of the information given in the Estimates, and the great and important questions raised, whether he still desires that they should be discussed in the small hours of the morning?

SIR W. HARCOURT: The right hon. Gentleman is mistaken in his view. The general policy of construction has been habitually discussed on the Ship-building Vote, and not on the first Vote. [*Cries of "No!"*] So I am informed. The right hon. Gentleman used the word "insist." I have never used that word. What I said was that we have not got on very fast with the Estimates, and I see no reason whatever why this first Vote for the Navy should not be taken, as it has been habitually taken, in a single night. What the Government desire is that we shall not be debarred from obtaining the Vote because of the hard and fast Twelve o'clock Rule. I may say to hon. Gentlemen opposite that we have not the smallest desire to use pressure. I am endeavouring to speak in moderate language. We do want to get on with the Public Business. If we can dispose of this Vote to-night, as we have disposed of it for the past 13 years, I think we shall be doing the Business of the House in the manner in which it ought to be done.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I am sure there is no reason to complain of the tone of the right hon. Gentleman. If he only desires to abrogate the Twelve o'clock Rule in order that the first Vote may be taken within a brief period after midnight, I, for one, shall not oppose the action of the Government.

MR. BARTLEY: As it appears that although the Chancellor of the Exchequer has put on the Paper a Notice of Motion for the suspension of the Twelve o'clock Rule for all the Estimates he does not now intend to make such a proposal, I wish to ask the right hon. Gentleman whether he will give us a promise that on future occasions he will

give us notice when he is going to suspend the Twelve o'clock Rule, and also put down distinctly what he means to include in it, instead of putting down a large proposal and withdrawing the greater part of it when pressure is brought to bear upon him?

SIR W. HARCOURT: That is not a fair representation of what I have done. First of all, the usual notice in this case has been given. It was necessary and proper to give the notice in the form in which it has been given, because, as the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the Opposition has very properly said, if the Debate on the first Vote should come to an end at 10 or 11 o'clock we certainly should go on with the other Votes. Therefore, it is not fair to say that we have put down too large a proposal, which we intended to withdraw under pressure. We are doing now exactly what we intended to do.

#### FINANCIAL EFFECT OF GOVERNMENT OF IRELAND BILL.

MR. GOSCHEN (St. George's, Hanover Square): May I ask the right hon. Gentleman a question which I shall put down for to-morrow if he cannot answer it now. Would he be good enough to have a Return prepared showing the effect of the financial proposals of the Home Rule Bill, so that we may see the effect of the withdrawal of the revenue for Ireland on the one hand, and of the Irish expenditure on the other?

SIR W. HARCOURT: I have been in communication for some days with the Treasury and with the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Bodmin (Mr. Courtney) on the subject. There is some difficulty about part of the Return. We shall have no difficulty in giving the principal part of what my right hon. Friend wishes, but there is some difficulty about a part of it. I cannot explain in answer to a question what the difficulty is, but I could tell him easily, with his experience, how it arises.

#### THE ARMY ESTIMATES.

MR. HANBURY (Preston): I should like to ask the Secretary for War when he intends to put down the Army Estimates? They were only circulated this morning, and I hope they will not be put down before Thursday at the earliest.

*Mr. A. J. Balfour*

\*MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN : We intend to take them on Thursday. I regret that they were only circulated this morning. I explained on Friday that they were first of all promised for Wednesday, then for Thursday, then for Friday, then for Saturday, and, finally, they have arrived on Monday. I think Thursday will be a convenient day.

#### SITTINGS OF THE HOUSE (EXEMPTION FROM THE STANDING ORDER).

Motion made, and Question put,

"That the proceedings on Supply, if under discussion at Twelve o'clock this night, be not interrupted under the Standing Order, Sitting of the House."—(*Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer.*)

The House divided :—Ayes 277 ;  
Noes 119.—(Division List, No. 21.)

#### ORDERS OF THE DAY.

##### SUPPLY—COMMITTEE.

Order for Committee read.

Motion made, and Question proposed,  
"That Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair."

#### PERSONS EMPLOYED IN HER MAJESTY'S DOCKYARDS.

SIR JOHN GORST (Cambridge University) : Before I move the Amendment of which I have given notice, I must record my protest against the circumstances in which the House of Commons are called upon in the present year to consider the Navy Estimates. The Member who is especially responsible for the efficiency of the Navy and the spending of the money which we shall be shortly asked to vote is not a Member of the House of Commons. As to the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary to the Admiralty, the only complaint I have to make against him is that, as representing the Board of Admiralty in this House, he is not, as he ought to be, the First Lord of the Admiralty. It is the duty of the First Lord of the Admiralty to represent in this very technical Department the public opinion of the country and to inform the professional Admirals at the Board of Admiralty of the wants, desires, and even the prejudices of the people of the

country, and it is also his duty in this House to represent to the Representatives of the people the technical opinion of the Board of Admiralty and the reasons which induced them to give effect to those opinions. It is quite clear that a person who is not a Member of the House of Commons, not in touch with public opinion, and who is removed from all familiar intercourse with the Members of this House, cannot satisfactorily fulfil those duties. In fact, a First Lord of the Admiralty who is removed from the criticisms and from the touch of this House is really of very little use at all. This peculiarity appears to be a sort of speciality of Liberal Administrations, because for the last 20 years—during the whole time I have had a seat in this House—I do not recollect any Conservative Government that have had a First Lord of the Admiralty other than a Member of this House, and certainly the last three Liberal Administrations have removed the First Lord of the Admiralty from the criticism and control of this House by appointing to that post a Peer of the realm. The Amendment of which I have given notice applies in terms only to the naval establishments of the country—because it would not have been in order if it had been more extensive—but the arguments I shall use are equally applicable to all those Departments of the Government which employ labour, such as the War Office, the Post Office, and the Board of Works, and the principle to which I am going to ask the House to assent applies not only to the Government establishments, but also to Municipalities and County Councils, and, in fact, to all Public Bodies who are employers of labour. The principle I wish the House to lay down is that whenever the public is an employer of labour, and the workers are working for the general public—the public of the United Kingdom, or the public of any division of the United Kingdom—that the employers should so regulate all the conditions of employment as to make themselves model employers of labour. In the late General Election we have most of us insisted upon our earnest desire to raise the position of the workman, and here is an opportunity to our hand. If we wish to raise the position of the workers throughout the country generally, we

must begin by those who work for us. The people and the Representatives of the people in a case of this kind have both the employers and the employed under their control. There are no economical difficulties in the way. The public when they employ workmen are not bound to make a profit or to screw down the cost of the product of labour. We are not face to face with any sort of foreign competition, and, therefore, if there is any honesty or sincerity whatever in the professions which we all of us make of our desire to raise the position of the worker, I do not see how we can possibly escape the necessity of beginning at home in the first instance, and seeing that the workers we employ are employed under conditions of justice and equity. The position I invite the House to take up is very well illustrated by the first branch of the Amendment, which says—

"That no person should in Her Majesty's naval establishments be engaged at wages insufficient for a proper maintenance."

Now, I suppose that almost every hon. Member of this House in his electioneering campaign last year lamented that so large a proportion of the workers of this country are in receipt of starvation wages, and that in the midst of our advance in civilisation we have such a great number of men, honest and industrious, and worthy, who with their wives and families have habitually to support themselves on insufficient food. We have also condemned in very strong terms the practice known as sweating, which means taking advantage of the crowded occupation of the labour market to induce people to do work for wages on which it is hardly possible for them to subsist. But how can we with any honesty complain of private employers taking advantage of foreign competition to pay their *employés* insufficient wages if the nation itself—which is able to pay sufficient wages, and which has no necessity to screw down the workman to the lowest amount which he will take—if the nation itself pays insufficient wages in its own establishments? Now, there is no doubt that some years ago the Board of Admiralty was in the habit of employing men at insufficient wages. There was, of course, according to the law of supply and demand, no difficulty in the Admiralty obtaining an ample supply of workmen

at low wages. Any employer can obtain almost any amount he likes of unskilled labour at quite insufficient wages to live upon, and the Admiralty was no better than nor worse than a private employer of labour. An inquiry was made into that matter about two years ago, and chiefly through the influence, I think, of the late Mr. W. H. Smith, the wages of the ordinary unskilled labourers throughout the naval establishments were raised. The wage was raised but not to what I should call a sufficient wage. The minimum wage, I believe, was paid at 17s.; and considering the dearth of house rents, and the dearth of living in most of our dockyard towns, I do not think anybody will stand up in this House and say that 17s. a week is a sufficient wage for a workman and his family. The rule such as it was has been evaded by the officials of the Admiralty by the employment of what they call boys, these boys being stalwart young labourers of 19 or 20, who are called boys, who receive boy's wages, and so evade the direction of the Government and the wish of this House that a minimum wage should be established below which anyone should not be paid. The first proposition to which I shall invite the House to assent is that in our naval establishments no man shall be employed at wages which are insufficient for his proper maintenance. I know very well what the effect of that would be if it were carried out. The effect would be that you would get into the naval establishments of the country nothing but the pick of the ordinary unskilled working men. Your wages would be higher than the wages of unskilled labour in the country, and you would gradually have drawn into the service of the State for our naval establishments the very pick of the unskilled workmen of the country, and I very much doubt whether the actual cost of labour would be raised thereby. I do not myself believe in what is called cheap labour. Men to whom you pay low wages, who are insufficiently nourished, who are in that hopeless condition which, unhappily, most of our unskilled workmen throughout the country are, cannot do as good a day's work as the well-paid and well-nourished workman; and I believe, even so far as mere money goes, the nation

would really gain by having no workmen in its establishments except those who are first rate and able to do a good day's work, which would be worth the extra money given them. And certainly the prestige and the honour of the nation would be greatly advanced by a rule of that kind, because I cannot think it creditable that a country like ours should have in its employ men such as we have heard of in Woolwich Arsenal, who are screwed down to an insufficient wage and who naturally feel that they are not being treated by the State as any private employer of labour who really was concerned for the condition of his labourers, would treat them. I see the Secretary for War present, and I have to say that my remarks as to the naval establishments will apply to the Ordnance Factory just as much as to the Admiralty. But I base my remarks on the naval establishments, and I would urge the House to pass a Resolution that in all the arrangements made with workers the Admiralty should be a model employer of labour. I have put down on the Notice Paper four particular conditions—namely, the hours of labour, wages, insurance against accidents, and provision for old age, these four being heads to which I wish specially to direct the attention of the House. I am quite sure that does not exhaust the list, and I also put in my Resolution “*et cetera*,” to show that there were many other conditions of labour in which the same principle ought to be applied. Now I begin with the question of hours. What professions did we all make at the General Election about hours? I suppose the majority of the Members of this House expressed to their constituents their strong sympathy with the movement which is going on now among the labouring classes all over the world for shortening the hours of work. We were all in favour of shortening the hours so far as they could possibly be shortened. The great majority of Members committed themselves to an eight hours day as being a quite sufficient maximum for the ordinary work of a workman; and though we differed as to the particular way in which this eight hours day was to be brought about, many Members pledged themselves to the full length of the enforcing of an eight hours day by legislative enactment; and others equally

anxious to see the hours of labour restricted to eight thought that it should be brought about by Trades Unions, or by agreement, or by the gradual progress of education, and of reasonableness on the part of those who employed labour. But here is a test of our sincerity in this matter. If we are so anxious that the hours of labour should be restricted to eight per day, here is an opportunity in which we can in the case of the workmen employed by ourselves limit ourselves to that duration of labour. How can any Member of this House be sincere in his desire to restrict the hours of labour to eight per day if he does not do his utmost to see that that limit of eight per diem is observed by the nation itself, in the case of the workmen whom itself employs? You see in this case there are none of the difficulties which attend the reduction of hours by an ordinary employer. We have no trade rivals to think of, neither foreigners nor persons in our own country; and if the Government is constrained to reduce the hours of labour, which its own servants have to work, to eight hours a day, it is impossible that any harm can be done. It would have one very good effect. It would try an experiment which would throw great light either upon the possibility of limiting the hours of labour by law, or upon the advisability of employer and employed limiting those hours by agreement among themselves. It would settle that very much agitated question whether the shortening of the hours of labour would not actually increase the efficiency, the value, and, possibly, even the quantity of the work performed. Of course, if the result of shortening the hours in the naval establishments of the country was what many people prophesy and believe on very good grounds—that the amount of work done would be not less, but more, the country would be a gainer by a shortening of the hours. It would get work greater in quantity or more valuable in its result than what it got by the long hours; but if, on the other hand, it turned out not to be so, and if it appeared that men working for the eight hours would not turn out as much work as in the longer hours, what would be the result? The only result would be that the nation would have to employ more labour; that



more men would be employed, more of the unemployed would be drawn into employment, and the only result would be that we should have to pay a trifle more for the product of labour, and our ships and our armaments would be a trifle more expensive than at present. But this would, as I have shown, be to the public advantage. In doing this we should not be setting the example, because it has been stated in the public Press that two large firms of shipbuilders in the North of England have actually, by agreement with their workmen, reduced the hours of labour to eight per day; therefore, in this particular instance, it is too late for the naval establishments of the country to set the example, and they could only follow the example already set by private enterprise. But I cannot understand how people can profess themselves so anxious to see the hours of labour in the country generally reduced to eight per day, and yet not begin in the public establishments of the country, where we have the control of both the employer and the employed. Our servants, having the will to do it, the thing can undoubtedly be done. If such a shortening of the hours of labour takes place, it must not be defeated by working systematic overtime. I know in almost every business and industry there must be overtime, and certainly in such an industry as in the shipbuilding yards of the country you may be obliged to have overtime, because in a national emergency—if there was, unhappily, danger to the country, or even where it becomes necessary to finish a ship by a particular day—it may be essential to work overtime. Overtime work is always costly. It always has to be paid for at a higher rate than ordinary work, and a man who has already done a good day's work cannot possibly do as much per hour in his overtime as he can in the shorter hours of his usual employment, and, therefore, you pay a higher price for a less amount of work. There is an example before us in America of the way in which overtime may be unscrupulously used by officials of Departments. In America about 20 years ago, a law was passed that in the Naval Department workmen should work only eight hours a day. That law was practically observed for many years; but about 10 years ago some enter-

prising Secretary of the Navy in America said that the ordinary hours of labour should be eight, but that the men might work two hours overtime each day, and from that period a large portion of the workmen employed—though the law says they must work only eight hours a day—have, in fact, worked 10 hours a day. There is no doubt that on the part of some officials in the Public Departments there is a tendency to introduce this system of working overtime, which will have to be watched, and which in the event of any such rule as I have referred to being introduced will lead to the lengthening of the hours of labour. Now I come to the wages. It is not quite so easy to say in a Government dockyard what is a fair rate of wages, because, in the first place, there are an immense number of trades in Government dockyards which do not always exactly correspond with trades which are called by the same names in private employment. For instance, the shipwright in a Government dockyard has to do a class of work which the shipwright in a private shipbuilding yard is not competent to perform. Wages also vary very much in different parts of the country. But the Admiralty need have no difficulty whatever in determining within a reasonable amount what wages should be paid in the dockyards if the workers are to be remunerated at the same rate of wages as prevail in private dockyards. To illustrate what I mean I will quote a case: And old constituent of mine in Chatham sent me a list of the wages paid in the various private shipbuilding yards throughout the country. In the case of joiners there is a considerable variation in wages paid in Birkenhead, Cardiff, Hartlepool, Hull, Liverpool, London, Newcastle, Stockton, and Sunderland, but the wages in those places are all alike—in this: that they are considerably higher than the amount paid in the Government dockyards. In the private yards there are longer hours worked than are worked in the Government yards; but even when you reckon the pay of the joiner per hour, the joiner in Her Majesty's dockyard is paid a sensible and considerably lower rate than the joiner in the private ship yards through the country. Exactly the same thing obtains with regard to the wages of every other trade employed in

dockyards with very few exceptions. On the whole, skilled trades in Her Majesty's dockyards are remunerated at lower rates, even when you have taken into account the shorter hours, than skilled trades in private shipbuilding yards. I call that on the part of the nation dishonest. I do not think it is honest. The value of labour is ascertained by what people engaged in private undertakings will pay for it; and for the Government to take advantage of its prestige, and of the prestige of Government employment, to pay men lower than the current rate of wages which obtains in the same industry in private undertakings, is, I think, scarcely honest. Now, what are the Government doing in these matters? I have heard questions answered in this House by the Admiralty and the War Office to the effect that these matters are being referred to the Statistical Department of the Board of Trade, and that in some indefinite future—what time this Statistical Department has worked its wicked will on the figures and Returns the Government will be prepared to do something. Now—that is the purest makeshift. It is an expedient adopted merely for the purpose of delay—of giving the Government time to make up its mind. ["Hear, hear!"] The Secretary for War says "hear, hear." I do not know the secrets of his prison-house, but I do know a great deal about the Admiralty, and I say without fear of contradiction, in the presence of the First Lord of the Admiralty and the Secretary to the Admiralty of the late Government, that the whole of the information has been pigeon-holed in the Admiralty for the last two years and a half, and that there has been quite sufficient time for the Government to make up its mind as to what is the Union rate of wages, and if they think it right to pay these wages. Two and a half years ago my right hon. Friend the Secretary to the Admiralty in the late Government (Mr. Forwood) made a tour of the naval establishments, and collected a most accurate and exhaustive account of the pay of the different trades in Government employment; and he also, as his commercial knowledge well qualified him to do, ascertained the rate of wages paid to similar trades in the great private shipbuilding yards of the country; and if the Secretary to the Admiralty will look in the records in his Office, he

will find, without troubling the Statistical Department of the Board of Trade, material at his disposal for coming to a conclusion as to whether the workmen in the Government dockyards should be paid the same rate of wages as the workmen in private establishments. I believe this Statistical Department of the Board of Trade will, after due incubation, produce an extremely valuable Return, and we will be glad to have that valuable information. But it is not statistics we want in this case, but action. It is not easy to put us off with statistics. We say, first, that the Government ought to pay their workmen wages at the current rates paid in private establishments; and, in the second place, that you have got ample material on which to take that course if you think proper to do so. I come now to the third head of my subject, which is insurance against accident. I do not desire to trench on the Debate on this subject, which I hope will take place very soon on the Second Reading of the Employers' Liability Bill. At present the Government have exempted themselves from employers' liability. They act towards the workmen in this respect from different principles which apply to private employers of labour. They may well do so, because the work in which the Government employ labourers in the naval establishments is highly dangerous to the labourers. Any body who has canvassed, in the old days of personal canvass, a dockyard town, could not fail to have been struck by the immense number of partially-lamed men met with in the town, for, notwithstanding all the precautions taken, accidents of a totally disabling, and even of a fatal character, are only too common in Her Majesty's dockyards. I think it will be admitted that the principle that ought to prevail with regard to accidents of this kind is that persons who carry on either for profit, or in the interest of the nation, as in the case of the Admiralty, a dangerous employment, should make good all the damage done to men in the ordinary course of carrying on their employment. I do not think, in the case of the dockyards at least, that the right of compensation should depend on anything like negligence on the part of any of the victim's fellow-workmen. I do not think it ought to depend on negligence even on his own part, unless

it were negligence of a criminal character—that, for instance, where a man wilfully violates the rules laid down for the common safety, or comes drunk to work, or anything of that kind, I do not think it is just that the nation should be called upon to compensate him; but certainly in ordinary cases where there has been nothing like criminal negligence, I think the nation should take a generous view of all hurts and accidents caused in its service. I feel strongly about this, because I have often had to go to the Treasury in former days on behalf of people who had been injured in the dockyards, and there was a principle—or perhaps I should say a prejudice—on the part of the Treasury that people ought not to be compensated who were hurt by what is called a “pure accident.” If the accident were caused by misconduct on the part of workmen, or if something unforeseen had taken place, the Treasury would compensate; but in cases of what were called “pure accidents” they would not give a farthing to the sufferer. There was one case of this kind that made a very great impression on my mind. The poor man was employed at some work in a large steel tube. To get out, he had to climb up the side of this pillar of slippery steel, and one day on getting out he tripped and fell on the dock, injuring his knee to such an extent that he lost the use of his leg. Now, I could never persuade the Treasury that this was an accident in which compensation should be given. It was said that if the man had, when going home, slipped on an orange peel in the street and broke his leg, the Government would not compensate him, and that this was an accident of the same nature. I say that an accident of that kind befalling a man in the course of his employment should be made good by his employer. In cases of this kind where accidents disable men for the rest of their lives, the men are ultimately thrown upon the ratepayers of the district, who support them in that poor and miserable way in which people who are destitute are supported under the rates. I come, lastly, to the question that has been much talked of in recent years—the question of insurance when inability to work any longer comes with old age to our workmen. I know that the Public Departments have long recognised as a sort of duty the making of

some provision for the declining years of their *employés*, but the arrangement which they make is an extremely primitive one. It is a very inconvenient one, and it certainly is one that cannot be held up as a model for the private employers of the country. In fact, I know many private firms who have regulations for providing for the declining years of their workmen far simpler, far better, and much more appreciated by the men than the regulations which prevail in the Public Departments of the State. I will explain the system at the Admiralty, which I think is the same system that also prevails at the War Office. In the first place, the workmen of the establishment are divided into two classes. One is called “established men” and the other “non-established men;” and whereas some provision is made for the old age of the established men only, the most miserable and meagre provision is made for the non-established men, though the non-established men are as good workmen and are engaged on as difficult work as the established men. Goodness knows why this purely arbitrary distinction is kept up by the Admiralty! They call the provision for old age in the case of established men “pensions.” Pensions are objected to by a great number of Members of this House, but these are not pensions at all. The non-established men get 36s. a week, the established men 34s. 6d. a week, and the 1s. 6d. deducted from the wages of the established men go to this Pension Fund. There has never been an actuarial valuation of what this weekly deduction of pay comes to, though the men have often asked for it. Why should not the Government let the men know exactly what these weekly payments amount to in value? I do not suppose that the weekly deductions cover the value of the old age allowances; but it is admitted that the employer should do something, and it is admitted that the Government should do something, to assist these schemes for old age allowances. In Germany, where the system of old age allowances is founded on scientific principles, the workman pays one-third, the employer one-third, and the State one-third. In this case the employer and the State are one, and should, therefore, contribute two-thirds; but I believe that the weekly

deductions from the pay of the workmen purchase a great deal more than one-third, or indeed one-half, of the benefits conferred by the old age allowances. Another cause for complaint is that this benefit is given only in the form of old age allowances. The allowance is not applied, in the case of the death of the workman, as a provision for his widow or family. If a workman dies before the age at which this provision is payable, the whole of his subscriptions are lost, and nothing is given to his widow, and the family of the workman in the case of premature death, which only too often happens, is left unprovided for. Then, as regards the non-established men, in order to keep up the sham of their being only temporary men, they are discharged every year and taken on again, though many of them have been in the employment of the Department for 20 and 25 years, just as long as established men; and because they are non-established men they have to retire on a totally insufficient provision for old age, with the result that they fill the labour market with old and incompetent labour, or have recourse to charity or to the parish and to spend the remainder of their lives, the flower of which they have spent in the service of the country, in some miserable, degraded fashion. You cannot call a system like that noble or just. Why should not the Government in all its naval establishments provide a proper, reasonable provision for the old age of its workmen which it can ask private employers to emulate? Why should there be this division into two classes? Why should not all the men who work for the State be treated alike? I can understand a man being put on a period of probation. You might have a system by which a man should not be put on the old age scheme until he has worked two or three years. The man might want to see whether the Government employment suited him, and the Government whether the man suited them. But if there is an old age system at all, every man employed by the State should be put on it. It is the duty of the Government as an employer of labour to recollect that the people in their employment will grow old in time, and that they ought to make provision for that time. Then why should not the workmen in Government employment, from

whose wages deductions are weekly made for this old age benefit, be allowed to see clearly what they are paying for? They have often asked for this information, but have never got it. Then why should not these deductions from the weekly wages to provide an old age insurance be carried to a separate and distinct fund, supplemented by a Government grant—a fund the solvency of which the Government would guarantee—and entirely separate from the money voted by Parliament for the purposes of the Admiralty? Our present system is a system of bad finance. We do not charge the full cost of labour in these dockyards in our Budget. What we do is: we charge the cost of labour less the reductions for insurance for old age, and that is why we are paying in the non-effective Budget to-day for the wages which were kept back years and years ago. Under a proper system of finance we could ascertain each year the amount which was covered by these deductions from wages, and by carrying that to a separate fund, supplemented if necessary by a Government grant, we should see exactly what the labour is costing us each year, and not, as now, be paying for labour that could be got at a cheaper rate 30 or 40 years ago. Another thing, why should there not be some variety in this scheme? Almost all Insurance Companies consult the wishes of the richer classes of society—they offer a variety of benefits which can be insured by these premiums and subscriptions; even the Post Office Savings Bank itself gives an option, but in the system that has been carried on in Government establishments there is only the one stereotyped idea and no choice given. I feel sure that if half a dozen reasonable and sensible men were to sit down together in consultation, I am quite sure a scheme might be thought out that would be satisfactory to the persons employed, which would be satisfactory to the Government that employed them, which would be a credit to the country, and which would be put before private employers of labour as a system they would do well to introduce amongst their *employés*. I am quite aware that the conditions of labour I have dealt with are only four out of the great many conditions to which labour is subjected, and I have selected these as forming promi-

ment are our servants ; we put them in Office, and we can turn them out; and if it was understood the will of the majority was they should act on the principle I have mentioned, the Government can begin to act at once. But I must say that until the philanthropic principles and fine promises we made to our constituents at the Election are carried out in the case of the Government workers, I believe we may go on discussing the labour question, but no one will give us credit for sincerity. I beg to move the Amendment which stands in my name.

COLONEL LOYD (Chatham) seconded the Amendment of his right hon. Friend (Sir John Gorst) with much pleasure, and he did so for the reason that he thought it ought to come from those (the Conservative) Benches, and he believed he was the only Representative of a Dockyard constituency who had the honour of sitting on that side of the House. No doubt the House was aware of the anxiety with which the *employés* of the dockyards looked forward to the discussion of the Naval Estimates from year to year. He had no doubt hon. Gentlemen who sat opposite and represented Dockyard constituencies would bear him out when he said they were constantly receiving deputations, the chief object of which was to point out the low rate of wages. The hon. Member for Portsmouth the other day said he had been obliged for some time past to consider these complaints and put them in order. As to the matter of wages, the right hon. Gentleman who had just sat down compared the wages given in a great many private shipbuilding yards with those given by the Government to-day, and they might be quite certain that in the private yards the employers would not pay a higher rate of wage than was absolutely necessary, as they wished to make as good a dividend as possible for their shareholders. At any rate, the Government ought not to pay the people they employed less wages than were paid by the employers in private shipbuilding yards. There was a matter of some 7s. or 8s. a week difference in the wages. Then, again, there was no doubt that the men on the establishment were suffering a great grievance. Each received the same amount of pay, but the men on the establishment were docked 1s. 6d. a

nent matter on which the Government would do well to set an example, and as being illustrative of the spirit and disposition which the Government of the country should show with regard to all the other conditions of labour. But it does seem to me that all those—and I believe they are the great majority of the House—who really desire to raise the condition of the workers in this country ought to address themselves to this subject, and ought to see, at least, that the Government of the country as an employer does observe conditions which they regard as satisfactory and equitable. I cannot help thinking that some of the new Members of this House must have been a good deal astonished at the contrast between the position the labour question occupied at the last General Election and the position it occupies in the discussions of this House. How much we all heard about the labour question last July; how little we have heard of it since the House met. Here is a real test; here is a question which seems to me to be a regular test question; you have got the whole matter entirely in the hands of a Department; you are under no obligation to make any profit out of the work; you have no foreign competitor who can rival you in any part of the world, and the only thing necessary in our public establishments is that the work should be good work. It really does not matter what the cost may be—[*A laugh.*] I hear people laughing. Of course, you may misinterpret what I say, and say what I mean is that we are to double the price of everything. An ordinary trader tells you that if the cost of the commodity is raised it may ruin him; but the Government is not shut out by anything of that kind; the Government is not bound to keep down the cost of building a ship to a particular price. If the old cost of building is exceeded by 3 per cent., what does it matter? we can afford to be just, even if our ships cost 3 per cent. more. I do not think it is becoming of a great country to have its materials 3 per cent. cheaper, if by doing so it has to sweat its *employés* or treat them with injustice. That is what I mean by saying it does not matter what our ships cost. We do not want an Act of Parliament; Government can begin to-morrow; it is a mere matter of administration. The Govern-

week. If a man joined the Dockyard at the age of 25, and served until the age of 60, he had put away as reserve pay a very considerable sum. If that man was killed by accident, his wife and children were given a certain amount to go on with; but if he died a few days or months before he would be obliged to leave the Dockyard, his wife and family got nothing. He considered that the 1s. 6d. that was kept by the Government was the man's own pay, and he had a right to dispose of it as he chose; and he thought that, instead of its being confiscated by the Government, it ought to be left to the man to dispose of it as he chose. The next thing he should like to mention was the question of classification. Classification at the Dockyards was thoroughly worn out. It was introduced by the late Government, no doubt after very careful consideration and forethought, and in theory it ought to work very well, but the result in practice was exactly the opposite. The chief cause of discontent in the Dockyards was this system of classification; and he thought that if men worked side by side, doing exactly the same work and having to do it equally good, it was hard that one man should be paid 2s. or 3s. a week more than the other. So strongly was this felt that on one occasion the men put their money into the common bowl, and then divided it out equally. He was perfectly certain there would be discontent in the Dockyards until this system of classification was done away with. It was not appreciated by the men who received the higher rate of wages any more than it was by the men who received the lower rate of pay. Another thing which caused great discontent down in the Dockyards was the check system. If a man arrived one minute late, or did not give up his ticket during the time the bell was ringing, the Dockyard gates were closed against him, and he had to wait a quarter of an hour before gaining admission; and in order to make up that lost quarter of an hour, he had to work three-quarters of an hour overtime. If a man was 16 minutes late, he was not allowed to go in that half of the day; and if it was a Saturday, he was not allowed to go in again. As an old soldier, he thoroughly appreciated the necessity of men being

punctual; but he thought this hard kind of treatment was uncalled for, and he was quite certain the Government could find some less hard way of dealing with the men. Then, again, there were the shipwrights' draughtsmen. These men led a very sedentary life, always in the office doing very minute work, and they were allowed no leave in the year with pay. They might have 12 days' leave if they chose to go without their pay. They were not allowed any sick leave at all. If they got sick they had to lose their pay. He thought this was very hard on men who led such sedentary lives that they should not be allowed a certain amount of leave with pay, and a certain amount of sick leave every year. Again, the naval warrant officers wished to be allowed to have commissions like their more fortunate brethren in the Sister Service when they arrived at the rank of quartermaster and riding-master. But he had no doubt this matter would be touched upon by other hon. Members, and he would, therefore, leave that point. The engineers, again, complained, and asked that in consideration of the time and money required to fit them for the Service, and the additional five years' service now proposed in consequence of the scarcity of engineer officers, the rates of pay on retirement might be made equivalent to those of the medical officers. He did not think these demands were at all out of the way, and he hoped that the Admiralty and the Government would give them careful consideration. Apart from the merit of any case, he desired to impress upon the Admiralty the expediency of treating all these questions with an open mind and no grudging hand.

#### Amendment proposed,

To leave out from the word "That," to the end of the Question, in order to add the words "in the opinion of this House, no person should in Her Majesty's Naval establishments be engaged at wages insufficient for a proper maintenance, and that the conditions of labour as regards hours, wages, insurance against accident, provision for old age, &c., should be such as to afford an example to private employers throughout the country,"—(*Sir John Gorst*,)

—instead thereof.

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question."

\*THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (Mr. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN, Stirling, &c.): The right hon. Gentleman who has brought this most important matter before the House has many advantages in doing so, and is eminently well qualified for the task he has undertaken. The right hon. Gentleman sat for many years for a dockyard constituency, which gave him an intimate acquaintance with all the conditions, the ideas, and grievances of those employed under the Admiralty in those places. I remember distinctly, when I had the honour to fill the post of Secretary to the Admiralty in this House, that he was one of the most difficult of my critics to reply to; and when he entered upon office, his official position, I observed, did not altogether curb his zeal on behalf of his dockyard constituents, because, if I remember aright, he on more than one occasion made a speech which caused no little embarrassment to those of his colleagues who were more directly responsible in the matter. But my wonder is, Sir, that when he became Secretary to the Treasury—being in that commanding position, with the purse-strings in his hands, and being in the position not only of presenting but enforcing a remedy—he did not seize that opportunity. He has told us to-night that there is nothing to be learned—there is nothing new in dockyard administration; that two and a half years ago the pigeon-holes at the Admiralty were filled with all the possible statistics that could be required; but if that was so, what became of the right hon. Gentleman during the time he occupied the position of Secretary to the Treasury? Now he comes to us from a serener and more philosophical atmosphere, that of an ancient University, so that, take him all round, I cannot imagine anyone more qualified to do justice to this great subject. I admit the great importance of this Motion—no one can dispute its importance; and it has an extent of application beyond that which would appear on the surface to belong to it. The Motion refers to one Department and to naval yards alone; but as the right hon. Gentleman pointed out, naturally the same principle must apply to all the other Departments of the Govern-

ment. Wherever there are Government labourers, there the same or similar conditions ought to exist, and that is why I venture to ask the House to listen to a few observations from me. If it could have been confined to the Navy, my hon. Friends who represent the Board of Admiralty in this House are much better informed, and much more competent to address the House on the subject than I am, but I imagine that the principle being equally applicable to all Departments of the State, the House may reasonably expect that the matter should be treated somewhat more widely than from a simple departmental point of view, and, therefore, I am anxious to state on the part of the Government the course we deem it our duty to take with regard to this very grave matter, as affecting the general service of the State. Now, Sir, what is the proposition submitted to us? The right hon. Gentleman has moved—

"That no person should in Her Majesty's Naval establishments be engaged at wages insufficient for a proper maintenance, and that the conditions of labour as regards hours, wages, insurance against accident, provision for old age, &c., should be such as to afford an example to private employers throughout the country."

Well, Sir, no one will dispute the proposition contained in that Amendment; it is when you come to the interpretation of its somewhat vague terms that uncertainty, if not difference of opinion, may be expected to arise. For instance, the right hon. Gentleman speaks of certain wages being insufficient for a proper maintenance. Well and good; but what is "a proper maintenance"? Obviously a proper maintenance depends upon two things: It depends, firstly, on the circumstances of the individual to be maintained, upon his personal temperament, upon the size of his family, the number of mouths he has to fill, upon the circumstances of the locality in which he lives, upon the prices that rule in those localities, upon the rate of rent, and upon many other circumstances that I need not refer to. And, secondly, our interpretation of the phrase "proper maintenance," as I say, depends not only upon what I have just stated, but it depends also upon the estimate which each one of us may form as to what a proper maintenance in such individual cases ought to be. And when I come

to the second part of the right hon. Gentleman's Amendment I find a similar ambiguity. He speaks of the State setting an example to private employers. I think it is fair to ask whether this means that in respect to the conditions of labour the Government should move distinctly ahead of public opinion, that the Government should take a fresh start, should break out in a new experiment, should force the hand of private employers throughout the country; whether that is the meaning, or whether the meaning is that it is our duty in the treatment of our workmen to keep well abreast of, and not in any respect lag behind, the action of the wisest, the best, the most intelligent, and, therefore, I would say, the most humane of private employers? Well, Sir, when I say, as I am prepared to say, that we accept and agree to the proposition of the right hon. Gentleman, it becomes necessary for me to explain in which of these senses we have accepted it. Let me say at once that with regard to the question of setting an example, when we say we agree to the proposition contained in the Amendment, we mean that the Government should show themselves to be amongst the best employers of the country, that they should be, if I may use the phrase, in the first flight of employers; but we do not take it to mean they should embark in new experiments far ahead of general practice. I would ask the House to consider for a moment the great difference between a Department of the Government and a private employer. What are the forces and influences that press on the private employer? He wishes to maintain and develop his business; he wishes that the productions of his business should be creditable to himself; he wishes also that his workmen should be contented and willing and prosperous. These motives influence the Public Department equally with the private employer. But the private employer has another motive—he has to make a profit, or, at least, to save himself from loss, because if he sustains a loss in business transactions his capital goes, and with it his power of employing workmen. I was astonished to hear the right hon. Gentleman allude to the fact that there was no motive on the part of the Government to make a profit,

as if it was some happy burden from which we were delivered. He said, "What does it matter what the cost of a ship may be? We have no difficulty about competition. The Government have no object to make a profit; we have no trade rivals." No, Sir; we are not bound to make a profit, but we are subject to another influence and consideration, I may well say, to take the place of eagerness to make a profit, and that is, that while we are not affected by loss and are not eager for profit, we are dealing—and must always remember that we are dealing—not with our own money, but with other people's money. I should have thought, of all people in the world, the late Secretary to the Treasury would have a full appreciation of that fact—that we are dealing with other people's money, and, therefore, it is not for us to run unusual or extraordinary risks in pursuing erratic courses. The taxpayer, from whom the money comes, wishes those employed by the Government to be treated with every consideration and every kindness. I say nothing in contravention of that; but I say that this public money is not given for the purposes of experiments, such as might lead to heavy loss in private trade, and such as the most open-minded and open-hearted employer might shrink from entering upon. There is nothing so easy as to show your generosity with other people's money. A great deal of popularity might be obtained by making large concessions without looking at results; but we must remember that not only the Government, but the House of Commons has responsibility in this matter, and that we should be cautious about setting an example. I accept in the fullest sense the principle that the terms of Government employment should be beyond reproach, but I draw a great distinction between that and the other proposal—that we should forge ahead of public opinion. I am not going to follow the right hon. Gentleman into all the points he raised. With regard to what he said as to pensions, I would like to say that I do not dispute his view. For many years the War Office authorities have ceased to take established men into their employment, and the result has been to facilitate the management of the Department, and certainly to avoid the anomalies and inconsistencies to which



reference has been made by the right hon. Gentleman. But the system is still in existence at the Admiralty, and we have to deal with it as it is; and I do not know that the Admiralty would be prepared to give up the system of establishment altogether. Coming now to the rate of wages, which is the most important question, I would say that proper maintenance is as I have said a question of locality and circumstances; but we do not shut our eyes to the change which has come over the public mind in regard to this matter. A few years ago—a very few years—it would have been regarded by both sides of the House as a sufficient answer if I had risen in my place and said, “We have men enough at the wages we offer. If our doors are open there is a constant stream of men coming in, but if they are shut there is a mob outside waiting to get in. Why, therefore, should we increase the wages?” That, I say, would have been considered a sufficient answer a very short time ago. I do not now believe in it. It is, indeed, a fact which it is necessary to bear in mind; but it is no longer a complete answer. We have ceased to believe in what are known as competition or starvation wages—not, perhaps, because of any development of philanthropy or generosity towards our fellow beings—we are not accustomed to rely upon sentimental ideas—but because we have convinced ourselves that starvation wages mean starvation work. It is not a question of generosity, or even of humanity, but a question of efficiency. You cannot get a full day’s work out of a man fit to do a full day’s work unless you pay him the wages of a full day’s work. Now, the view which I am entitled to express on behalf of the Government in this matter is that which I have just stated to the House. The right hon. Gentleman said there had been a good deal of delay, and somewhat gratuitously suggested that the Government had engaged the Board of Trade to collect statistics with the object of shelving the matter. I need scarcely assure the right hon. Gentleman that there was no such object in our minds. No doubt we differ a little from the right hon. Gentleman. He soars into the sky and begins to build his house from there; we prefer to begin upon the ground, with a more solid foundation, and perhaps ultimately we may

reach quite as high a pitch as the right hon. Gentleman himself. We have been using that most useful Labour Department of the Board of Trade which has just been created, because it is necessary to collect and compare the facts of all the Departments of the Government interested. The wages of some 40,000 men have to be tabulated and compared, and that necessarily has taken considerable time. Another delusion is that the matter has been handed over to the Board of Trade for decision. The Board of Trade is merely engaged in collecting, comparing, and tabulating.

LORD G. HAMILTON (Middlesex, Ealing): They are to report on the subject?

MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: Yes; they will report the result of their tabulation, but in no other sense will they report. It is obvious that we must have among the different Departments of the Government not identity or uniformity, but harmony of action. That is all I am in a position to state; I can announce no detailed decision. Looking at the figures laid before us, undoubtedly the fact is disclosed that in many cases the payment of labourers is too low and that a higher standard should be gradually, if not immediately, adopted. But Government *employés* have many collateral advantages. There is continuity of work irrespective of season or weather, and that does not prevail in all similar establishments outside, and there are holidays, sick pay, and other advantages. I do not think it would be right, in speaking of these Departments, especially of the War Office and the Admiralty, that I should fail to pay some tribute to the way in which they are managed. Everyone will admit, even if there are some points in which an improvement might be effected, yet when allowance is made for the natural tendency of all Government Departments to crystallise—it will be admitted, I say, that they have been managed and developed and controlled with the greatest intelligence and energy, more especially of late years. The system has been brought well up to the latest ideas, and I do not think these Departments need fear comparison with any private establishments in the country. The right hon. Gentleman has compared the wages paid in the same trades at Chatham and in the North. But every

one knows that the rate of wages is higher in the North than in the South, and that is why we cannot keep locality out of view in dealing with this question. There are exceptional circumstances affecting some Public Departments, and one that is very keenly felt at Woolwich is the want of houses and the exorbitant rents that are demanded for them. This is a most serious element in the employment of men at Woolwich. Some two or three years ago, when an addition was made to the wages of a certain class of men in the Dockyard, the landlord straightway raised the rents of these men an additional shilling or so. I do not know to what agency one could look for relief from this contingency; but I do hope, at all events, that if a class of men have their wages raised, the increase will not go into the pockets of landlords, or ground landlords, or anyone else than the men themselves. Another matter affecting employment, especially in my own Department, is that at Woolwich there are employed 782 old soldiers, pensioners, or old servants. Many of these men are not fit to do the full day's work of an able-bodied man, and I should be sorry if it were made difficult to keep these men in their present employment by any scheme for the raising of wages. The wages paid to these men are an addition to the pension they receive, and do not involve any reduction of it; and, as they would not be able to do a full day's work for full pay, I should be sorry for any change which might be prejudicial to their interests as old soldiers and servants of the State. I think I have said enough to show that the Government, while unable to embark on any daring scheme, such as has been suggested to us, are yet anxious to avoid any act or omission which might betoken indifference to the welfare of workmen, or that might be quoted by private employers who were seeking justification for illiberal dealings with their own men. Nay, further, I have said that in my opinion not only does the workman suffer, but the work itself also suffers, from inadequate wages being paid. In the interest of the State itself, the Government are prepared to see that the general principle of the Motion is acted upon, and by its reasonable and gradual application in any cases which at present

seem to conflict with it, advantage will be gained not only to the Public Service, but also to the community at large.

\*COLONEL EDWIN HUGHES (Woolwich) said, he had listened to the speech of the right hon. Gentleman with great interest, and he hoped it meant that something would be done to remove the grievance under which the men in the Government employ suffer, but he could not forget that many fair promises were made by other Governments and were never carried out. After the expression of opinion which the right hon. Gentleman had addressed to the House, they had some ground for satisfaction; and he hoped the Government would do all it could in the matter in accordance with the spirit of the right hon. Gentleman's words, and that what was attempted by the Government would be attended with complete success, and produce satisfaction to the men. The question of an establishment in the yards had been referred to as an important one. It would seem to be considered necessary to have an establishment at Dockyards. There was no establishment at the Woolwich Arsenal, and why it had been done away with he could not understand. It was necessary, in his opinion, that they should always have a large number of workmen prepared to carry on the work in these great Departments in the event of war; and what applied to ships ought also to apply to guns and stores. He brought the wages question under the attention of the late Government on the 8th of August, 1890. That Government made inquiry, and, after several months, some £100,000 a year was added to the wages of the workers in the Dockyards. There was much yet remaining to be done. For instance, there was the ordinary labourer, who had no Trades Union, and was too poor to subscribe to a Trades Union, or even a Benefit Society. They were deserving of the sympathetic consideration of the Government. Then they should remember a fact which he wished to press upon them—namely, that the standard of wages as between the Dockyards and under the contracts for Government work varied a great deal to the disadvantage of the Government worker. In the contracts the Government in-

sisted on the payment of the current rates. He did not see why they should not act on that principle. They had a rate of 6d. per hour for unskilled labourers in London, and only 4d. per hour was paid at Woolwich, which was in the County of London. The rate of wages in the Metropolis would, no doubt, differ from that in the provinces, and be higher, because the rents and rates were higher here than in, say, Devonport. Expenses were greater here than in other places, and a distinction required to be made, a sum of 17s. per week made a poor wage. Even at Chatham and Woolwich this was the case; but there was a difference between these two places, and a difference which the Government ought to recognise. At the Dockyards the Government were asked to give £1, or 22s. per week to an unskilled labourer; in London he expected he would get 24s. He would refer the House to the Report of the evidence given before the Labour Commission by a man named Clements and another named Lewington on the 12th of July last year. These men were from Woolwich and Chatham. This evidence showed that the men were working there for 4d. per hour, and at Woolwich, alongside other men, working for contractors who were in receipt of 6d. and 8d. In regard to strikes, they never had any in Government works, because the Government would then use the soldiers as labourers. This was not the case with private employers, who had consequently very heavy difficulties imposed upon them. He believed in the right of every man to a pension for his services to the State. They allowed the principle to operate in the Civil Service, and he was of opinion there should be no difference of treatment between any section of servants of the State. He did not know whether the right hon. Gentleman had referred to the classification of men as boys in the Dockyards. There were men at 18 years of age who were married, and were fathers of small families, and they were classed as mere boys, and paid boys' wages. In the Army a person of 18 would be considered a man; but that was not the case in the Dockyards. It would take a good deal of time to go into the various details, and he did not wish to trouble the House; but he did think they ought to alter the system

under which a man was paid at the rate of 7s. per week below Government contractor's men, working in the same place, and at the same class of work.

\*MR. HUDSON E. KEARLEY (Devonport) said, he had only a few matters to bring under the notice of the House, and he would not detain them long. He did not think it could be said that Government *employés* were fairly treated in point of wages. They should have a standard at least equivalent to that of the Trades Unions; but the fact was, the treatment of Government *employés* was becoming a matter of public notoriety, and the Trades Union Congress, meeting last year at Glasgow, was so impressed with the importance of the subject that it agreed to a resolution calling upon the Government to pay Trades Union wages. Although he did not wish to go into any elaborate detail, he was bound to say that the discussion on some of the most interesting points had been insufficient and inadequate. In the whole history of the Dockyards nothing which the Government had ever done had caused so much discontent and agitation as the introduction of a system by the late Government two years since into certain trades called classification. This classification was a system which divided up into various classes for the purposes of apportionment of wages only workmen who, in their particular trades, were daily engaged upon a similarity—indeed, an identity of labour—but were made by this scheme the recipients of a dissimilar wage. The professed object of classification was to recognise and reward the difference of talent in the men that come within its scope. Prior to 1891, when the principle was introduced by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for the Ormskirk Division, all the men employed in the various trades affected by this scheme were paid an all-round wage, and such increases of pay as were made from time to time, notably in 1856 and 1873, were of a uniform character. For instance, shipwrights on each occasion received 6d. per day increase. Although a gradation of pay had always existed in some trades in the Dockyards—chiefly in the steam branch—the particular trade to which this innovation had been made—trades in which many thousands of men were engaged—had, prior

to its introduction, always been paid on the basis of a uniform weekly wage. He was perfectly willing to admit that in no particular walk in life where men were engaged in similar work could there be a dead level of ability. But the question was whether it was possible to so sift it and allocate it as this system of classification professes to do—that they could accord to each individual his precise place in consonance with his actual ability and merit. He said that was impossible. However good the intention of this scheme might have been, however feasible and sound it might have appeared in theory, in practical working it had caused, from the hour of its introduction, an increasing chorus of dissatisfaction and protest from the workmen who were sufferers by it. It had never been applied by any private firm. To convey to the House the unfair working of this classification scheme, he would take as an illustration one of the most important trades of the yards, both in numbers and skill, to whom it had been applied—that of the shipwrights. The shipwrights represented in number one-fifth of the entire body of Dockyard *employés*, totalling 4,500 men out of 21,000. The shipwrights in Her Majesty's Dockyards, until classification was introduced, received an all-round weekly wage, but now they were placed on several different rates of pay. The established men—that was those who were on the permanent staff and entitled to the benefits of the Superannuation Act—had seven different rates of pay, and the hired men—that was, those who were subject to dismissal at a week's notice—had five different rates of pay, thus making in all 12 different rates ranging from 29s. 6d. to 34s. applicable to members of one and the same trade who were, to all intents and purposes, equal in mechanical skill and associated together in carrying out the work incidental to their calling. The system could not be with justice applied to the trade for the obvious reason that the men were employed constantly in gangs of 25 men, where each man had to do practically the same amount of precisely similar work. For instance, in sheathing the sides, or laying the decks of a war-ship, each man performed an equal share of the whole job, but got a dissimilar wage, varying

in amount from 1s. to 4s. per week. They worked also in pairs, either side by side or on opposite sides of a ship, at identical jobs, but the men thus associated on equal working terms were, as he had just said, in receipt of unequal wages. Very frequently, too, it happened that men receiving the lowest scale of pay were called upon, on account of their known mechanical skill, to carry out work of the highest value and responsibility which was not entrusted to those receiving higher wages. The method adopted at the outset in its application proved the absurdity and unworkableness of the system. The appointment of the men to the various classes was determined by purely arbitrary selection. Although in the Admiralty instructions it was enjoined that

“competency, diligence, and conduct were to be regarded as of primary importance, due consideration to be given to length of service,”

this was construed in a variety of ways by the various yards, with the inevitable result that an anomalous and capricious system of selection was brought into existence. For example: At Sheerness servitude was the principle of selection; at Portsmouth each foreman to whom the responsibility of selection was delegated adopted his own particular ideas as to the men to recommend for the various classes, with the result that men of undoubted ability and long service were passed over to the advantage of some that were inferior in both. Devonport and Pembroke, too, were more or less subject to similar treatment. Now, these men very justly, to his mind, pointed out that they were all skilled mechanics, each having served a seven years' apprenticeship at their trade, and had proved their abilities to be of the highest order before being employed by the Government, and they regarded classification as a stigma and degradation, for they rightly said that such a system must carry with it the presumption that the highest paid man was the better workman, and *vice versa*, whereas such was not the case; indeed, some of the oldest and best reputed hands were getting the lowest scale of pay. On the occasion of the visit of the late Financial Secretary it was pointed out to him, and not by him denied, that at Devonport alone there were 120 established men with not less than 12 years' service—men in the prime of life, with nothing

against them, the pick of the yard, who were receiving the lowest possible rate, whereas men with far less servitude had been promoted over their heads into the higher classes. It is urged by those responsible for the scheme that it is an incentive to work; but this is mere pretence, for each class is limited to numbers, and hence diligence might be exerted but cannot be rewarded until death or superannuation created a vacancy. To sum this part of the case up—that was to say, the question of the principle of classification—the men were unanimous, or practically so, in demanding that this absurd and unjust innovation should be abolished, and that the old principle—the principle which had stood the test of so many years—be reverted to, so that men of equal skill, performing equal work, may receive an equal wage. He had said the demand was unanimous. The House would judge of the correctness of this statement when he said that in Devonport alone, out of the 850 shipwrights employed there, all save 28 men had recently signed a petition protesting against the continuance of the system, and that in the combined yards no less than 3,650 signatures, out of a total employment of 4,500 men, had been recorded in a similar protest. And even more forcible was the practical protest made in the Dockyard boroughs at the General Election, when five seats were lost to the other side—not really, as the late Prime Minister expressed it, because they were fired with indignation against some obscure Admiralty wrong, but largely owing to the enforcement of the principle of classification. As a further objection, he might say that the Government had been advertising up and down the land for shipwrights, but were unable to supply their requirements, because outside men would not subject themselves to such a plan. Now, he wished to say a few words with reference to the pay of the various trades in the yards and other establishments, and he would take the shipwrights first. He wished to prove that they were much underpaid as compared to the wages current in the same trade in private yards. An established man suffered a reduction in his wages on becoming established, in virtue of becoming entitled to the benefits of the establishment. So, for the purpose of argument, he would take the

*Mr. Hudson E. Kearley*

hired man, who might be considered approximately the counterpart of his *confrère* in the private yards. The hired men under the classification scheme had five different rates of pay. The minimum pay of these five rates was 30s. per week, and each of the intervening grades was marked by an increase of 1s. per week until the maximum of 34s. per week was reached. The right hon. Gentleman the late Secretary to the Admiralty, to whose inception this scheme was, he believed, due, stated before the Royal Commission that, in fixing the wages of the hired shipwrights, he adopted as a basis the scale of wages paid by some of the largest yards in the country—accustomed to do war-ship work—at two periods—namely, 1886, when shipbuilding was at about its lowest ebb and wages were at a minimum point; and 1890, when it was at a very high-water mark, and wages were exceedingly good. He found the mean of these yards to be 34s. 1d. per week, and that the wages paid in Government Dockyards to hired shipwrights corresponded to that mean exactly. Now, 34s. per week represented the maximum rate which was received by a limited number only, whereas the actual mean of the five grades he had already referred to was not 34s. per week, but less than 32s. But this was not all. The right hon. Gentleman's mean was altogether a fallacious one, as, on the unimpeachable authority of Mr. Wylie, the secretary of the Amalgamated Shipwrights, one of the largest and most important Trades Union, they had it that the average of these two periods, in the seven most important yards, where war ships are built—the Tyne, Clyde, Mersey, Thames, Belfast, Hull, and Barrow—the identical yards quoted, he believed, by the right hon. Gentleman—was not 34s. 1d., but 36s. 10d. per week, and that the average for the past 10 years was 37s. 6d.

Mr. FORWOOD (Lancashire, Ormskirk): What years are the figures for?

Mr. KEARLEY said, he was quoting from a well-known and recognised authority, Mr. Wylie, and he was satisfied the figures were correct. That being so, what justification was there for paying these men at least 5s. per week below the rates in practice obtained elsewhere? but the comparison itself was

an unfair one to the Dockyard shipwright. A shipwright outside was a worker in wood only; but in the Dockyards, he was in addition a worker in iron, steel, and every conceivable thing incidental to the building of the hull and fittings of a man-of-war; he undertook, for example, plating, armour-plating, and torpedo fittings. Outside the Dockyards such work was done by various bodies of mechanics belonging to distinct trades, many of whom, if not all, received much higher pay than shipwrights. But whenever any comparison had been made, the Dockyard shipwright had been considered in relation to the outside shipwright, who was, as he had just said, a worker in wood and wood alone. Hence it was they had suffered in wages, whereas they should be considered according to the value of the work they did, and paid accordingly. He next came to the tugsmen. These men had always to be ready to proceed to sea to meet any emergency in assisting vessels in distress, bringing ships to port, &c. At present they were worse paid than any unskilled labourer in existence. They worked very excessive hours; their normal day was never less than 12 hours, and it frequently extended to 16 and even 18 hours; but they got no extra pay for overtime. The boats were woefully under-manned, and, altogether, their life was a very hard one. They were what are termed seven-day men, and signed articles of agreement by which they were bound to serve by day and by night. Tugsmen comprised seamen and stokers. Their pay respectively was 21s. 7d. and 23s. 4d. per week of seven days, which, on the basis of a 12 hours day, worked out at something between 3d. and 3½d. per hour. The House would scarcely credit it, but it was 17 years since the seamen received a rise in their wages, and 30 years since the stokers were similarly favoured; and when he mentioned that they were generally confined to their ships 132 hours out of 168 hours per week, it could not be gainsaid that their lot was not a happy one. Formerly, as a compensation for their confinement, the men were granted a day's leave once a month, but this had been curtailed. They also formerly received an allowance of 1s. per day when engaged on navigating duties, and also when employed on outport moorings.

The allowances had been swept away. Also when they signed articles, it was agreed that in the case of sickness or hurts, they should receive half-pay, but this contract had been violated. Turning to the Works Department, he would point out that its business was to keep in order all the buildings—internal and external. Formerly this was carried out by contract, but when this Department was taken over from the contractor in 1885 it was expressly stated by the Government to those who entered their employment and had previously been with the contractor that they should enjoy all the Dockyard privileges. This pledge has not been observed in many ways. In the first place, in August, 1887, an Admiralty Order was issued, increasing the working time per year of each man by 318 hours as compared to Dockyard hours, without any corresponding increase of pay, and this injustice continued in spite of repeated protests until January of last year. But beyond this, at the present moment, the mechanics in the Works Department had not participated in the increase of wages given in April, 1891, to the mechanics in the yards; and to show how anomalous this was, he stated it as a fact that many of the mechanics in the Works Department, previous to joining it, worked at their trade in the Dockyards, and were admittedly men of equal skill and ability to those in the yard; yet, in spite of this, to-day their maximum scale of pay was positively lower than the minimum of corresponding trades in the Dockyards and as compared to the rate of pay of men employed in similar work by private firms very much below it. He could quote comparisons from the Works Department Petition, but did not wish to detain the House. Then, as to the labourers, the wages of unskilled labourers in the Dockyards were 17s. to 18s. per week, but he contended that such wages were altogether insufficient to enable a man to do more than eke out a bare subsistence. There were numbers of men in his constituency working—not in the Dockyard—but in other Government establishments, who were only receiving 16s. per week—notably in the Naval Ordnance Department at Bull Point and Stonehouse, and in the Gun Wharf and Victualling Yard. Many men, too, at the Royal Naval

Hospital at Stonehouse, whose duties were in many cases most responsible ones, were the recipients of the wretched pittance of 2s. 6d. per day—a scale of pay which had not been augmented for the past 30 years, and for this they perform really responsible duties, and, moreover, they had to work seven days per week, and had, in addition, to be on duty at least one night every week. The minimum rate of pay for unskilled labour should be not less than £1 per week, and this was what the men were asking for. Many men classed as labourers were employed on skilled work, and yet received only a labourer's pay. The men urged that, instead of being classed and paid as labourers, they should be treated as minor trades, and paid artisans' wages. Skilled labourers so called do drilling, rivetting, painting, iron caulking, and other skilled work which appertains to distinct trades in private firms, and commanded good money, whereas dockyardsmen rarely exceeded £1 2s. per week. Again, it was urged on behalf of the Government that their employment ensured continuity of work, whereas private yards did not. Well, supposing this were true in its entirety, which it was not, it was nothing for which the Government was entitled to take credit, nor a justification for paying an inferior wage. What was the essential condition to continuity of employment? Why, continuity of orders. This the Government can always command, because its normal shipbuilding and maintenance programme is always far in excess of the capabilities of its own Dockyards. It would be contrary to the most rudimentary commercial principles were it not to keep its own plant and machinery and other sunk capital preferentially employed before passing orders to outsiders; therefore, continuity of employment, such as it was, was a mere matter of expediency, and nothing for which the Government were entitled to fine their workpeople. Besides, it was by no means assured to all, for discharges were frequently taking place, and quite within the past few years men by thousands had been discharged. There were certain privileges, but nothing more than the State, as an example, ought to give. The men had four days' holiday per year, which were paid for; but these had to be worked up for by overtime. These

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holidays cost the Government something less than 6d. per workman per week. If a man was injured in the course of his employment he got free hospital and sick attendance, and half-pay during the continuance of his disablement. If permanently disabled, in the case of an established man, in addition to his superannuation, he got some additional compensation for the accident. A hired man got a gratuity, and, possibly, compensation. In the case of being killed, the widow got a small pension of £10 to £12 per year. An established man got a pension on reaching 60 years of age on the basis of 1-60th of his pay for every year he has served on the establishment. A hired man, after serving seven years, becomes entitled to a gratuity on discharge of a week's wages for every year he had served. Should he, however, become established, he forfeited all right to the gratuity, and the time he had served as a hired man was not permitted to reckon towards his pension. He hoped, in conclusion, that the Government would consider all the facts and endeavour to remove the anomalies of which complaint was made. He understood that the Government were making an exhaustive inquiry with a view to redressing the injustices which everywhere prevailed. He could not, of course, forecast their decision, and although they accepted the general principle of the Amendment of the right hon. Member for the University of Cambridge, he felt it his duty to warn them that the men would not much longer tamely submit to a continuance of the existing system, more especially as regarded classification, to which he referred at the outset. The Party opposite by introducing it had sown the storm and suffered; but if this Government persisted in maintaining this hated scheme it would assuredly be reserved for them to reap the whirlwind. It would be a regrettable thing to have labour troubles in the Government Departments, but he unhesitatingly asserted if the State continued to treat its *employés* in the future as it had done in the past they would at no very distant period be face to face with serious labour difficulties.

MR. JOHN BAKER (Portsmouth) said, as one of the Members for Portsmouth, he wished to say just a word or two. He agreed with the observations of the hon. Member who had just sat

down, that the system of classification was disliked by the workmen. He did not see how it could be otherwise, since the system was a most unjust one. He believed the late Administration was not unaware of the grievances under which the men suffered, and of their objections to the system. What better illustration could the House have of the value and worth of a system than was to be gained from an examination of the opinion of those who were chiefly interested in it? A recent alteration in the system had caused great dissatisfaction. The Member for Devonport had given the figures with regard to the combination of stupidity and injustice to which he alluded. The Admiralty had before them evidence to convince them that the system was one of great injustice to the workers. He thought the view of the Government would give general satisfaction. The duty of the right hon. Gentleman was to keep abreast of public opinion. Well, that was all the men wanted; and if they kept abreast of public opinion, they would yield to the demand for higher wages. The anomalies that existed in the case of these men should be corrected. Certainly the attitude taken up by the Government was eminently satisfactory. They were going to inquire, and the men did not ask for more than that, for they were satisfied that the result would be the improvement of their position. With regard to pensions, the right hon. Gentleman who had moved the Motion had not exaggerated the injustice suffered by these men in the slightest degree. But it was manifest that the right hon. Gentleman had been aware of this injustice for many years, and had not been able to induce his colleagues to remedy it. The complaint was that the Government held back part of the pay of the men, and then, if a man died before reaching 60 years of age, the whole amount was forfeited, his wife and children not receiving a farthing, and oftentimes becoming chargeable to the parish. In some towns, such, for instance, as that he represented (Portsmouth), there were hundreds of cases of this injustice, which applied to the Naval Service itself as well as to the Dockyard service. It was late in the day for the right hon. Gentleman (Sir J. Gorst) to condemn the present system, but "better

late than never." In the future it was to be hoped the First Lord of the Treasury would be able to give the men the same rights and privileges as were conferred on the officers. That was all they asked. There should be no inequality in regard to the rates of pensions; and as the matter was a serious one for the men and their families and the localities in which they resided, he hoped it would not be overlooked. He put implicit faith in the promises of the present Government. He believed they would not be cowed, nor be led by the permanent heads of Departments, but that, being in touch with the public mind and demands, they would give a reasonable response to them.

MR. KNATCHBULL-HUGESSEN (Kent, Faversham) said that as representing the Dockyard constituency of Sheerness, he rose to give a partial support to the Motion of his right hon. Friend. That portion of the Amendment which stated that the Government ought to supply wages sufficient for proper maintenance he could not agree with. It was somewhat vague and difficult to understand, and the same view had been taken by the Secretary to the Admiralty. Neither was he able to agree with his right hon. Friend when he said that they should endeavour to regulate the hours of labour. There his right hon. Friend committed himself to the mischievous revolutionary and Radical doctrine, that it was right to interfere with the liberty of a man to work as long as he chose. But when his right hon. Friend said that as to wages and pensions the conditions under which the men worked should be such as to afford an example and model to private employers throughout the country, he perfectly agreed with him. No doubt much had been done for dockyardsmen of late years; still, there was not that satisfaction and contentment which ought to exist in Government establishments. The dockyardsmen no doubt owed a very heavy debt of gratitude to the late Government, though he was bound to say that, judging from the way their votes were cast at the late Election, it did not seem as if they shared that opinion. As a matter of fact, the men had received a decided and substantial increase to their pay from the late Government, an increase which entailed upon the



National Exchequer an expenditure of £90,000 a year. They had received continuous employment. When the dockyardsmen stated their grievances they were apt to undervalue the advantages they undoubtedly got from establishment. Their hours of labour were from 51 to 53, and contrasted favourably with the 54 hours in private yards. However, as a matter of fact, the men were of opinion that they did not receive adequate pay for the services they rendered, compared with what was paid for similar work in private yards. The hon. Member for Chatham had rightly stated that the difference between the wages in the Government and the private yards was 6s. or 7s. per week, though from that must be deducted the advantages, whatever they might be, of belonging to the establishment. The work in the Government yards compared favourably with that done in the private yards, both for cheapness and quality. The main ground of dissatisfaction was the system of classification. He had repeatedly urged on the Admiralty the desirability of altering the system, but without effect; but he hoped the Party now in Office would prove more pliable than their predecessors. The system of classification was so obnoxious to the men that they had stated over and over again that they would rather receive less pay, provided that it was uniform. The present system could not be adopted in private yards. Why, then, should the Government seek to thrust down the throats of the men whom they said performed such good service a system which they detested, and which no private employer in the Kingdom would venture to adopt? He endorsed every word which had fallen from his right hon. Friend in moving his Motion on the subject of pensions. It was complained that though the men paid a certain amount, deducted from their weekly wages, towards pensions, if a man died before the age at which he was entitled to receive a pension, he forfeited every farthing of it. That was a great injustice which he (Mr. Knatchbull-Hugessen) hoped would be remedied. Another grievance was this: that a man might work as a hired man for 20 or 25 years, and then be put on the establishment; but none of the time he had put in as a hired man was allowed to count for pension. If a man remained

as a hired man on reaching the pension age he would be entitled to a bonus; but he forfeited the bonus by being placed on the establishment. These grievances were genuine, and he trusted the Admiralty would be able to make concessions. There were other classes of men in the Dockyards who considered themselves under disadvantages, as compared with men in the private yards; but he would enter more fully into their case on the Dockyard Vote. There were the warrant officers, the hammermen, the lightermen, seamen, and stokers. The seamen and stokers were employed on steam tugs, and they complained that in regard to their pay and chances of promotion they were not on an equality with other classes of men in the Government yards, and certainly not with the same class of men in private yards. The Admiralty had materials before them on which to form a judgment on these matters, and he hoped that before much time elapsed a final statement would be made to show that all these grievances would be removed.

MR. E. J. C. MORTON (Devonport) desired to call the attention of the House to five specific questions as affecting the *employés* in Dockyards. The first point had reference to the grievances which were felt with regard to classification. There were reasons which ought to appeal in an especial manner to a Liberal Government in favour of the abolition of the system of classification. Under that system what was done? The old system of favouritism had been re-introduced. Before that system was introduced in the trades in which it now obtained, every form of promotion was by a method of open examination, but under the system of favouritism a man was promoted arbitrarily at the will of the person above him. He did not wish to bring any charge against the officials of the Admiralty in this respect; but whether this favouritism was exercised or not, it was a serious matter when workers in a Government Dockyard believed that their only chance of getting on under the system of classification was by currying favour with the men immediately above them. Whether this state of things existed or not he could not say, but it was surely dangerous to the Public Service that such an opinion should widely prevail. He wished to bear his

testimony in favour of the contention of the senior Member for Devonport (Mr. Kearley), who had not spoken too strongly when he said that the workers in the Dockyards—than whom a more loyal set of men did not exist—might by a sense of irritation be goaded into a condition of mind which might prove disastrous to the Service. The second point to which he desired to call attention was the system known as “check measurement,” which he thought should be absolutely abolished as being unfair to the men, who did not know the scale of prices on which they were paid, nor the scale by which their work was measured. The late Government had given orders that every man who wanted to know the scale of prices should be informed on application to the Dockyard authorities. He had been told, however, by a man who had gone to the authorities, that on putting the necessary question, he had been scowled at by the official, who wished to know what he wanted the information for. Coming to his third point with regard to the question of hours of labour, he thought that hon. Members who did not take as special an interest in these Dockyard questions as Dockyard constituencies necessarily did, would under-rate the importance of the subject. It was supposed that in winter the Dockyard artificers worked 8 hours, and in summer 8½ hours; but in some small trades the hours were disgracefully long. In the telegraph department of Devonport, for instance, the men worked alternately a long hours week and a short hours week. The number of hours for the short hours week was 54, or 9 hours a day, and the number in the long hours week was 72, or 12 hours a day. For this the men received 3s. a day. In addition to that, they were liable to work overtime to any extent that might be demanded by the Government, and for that liability they were merely allowed to count seven days in the week instead of six. His last points were the questions of wages and pensions, which he would take together. They were intimately connected, particularly amongst those classes who received the smallest wages. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Cambridge University was correct—and it was important that the House should realise it—when he said that these pensions were in

no sense to be regarded in the light of such pensions as the one which might be received by a First Lord of the Treasury. They were simply deferred pay, and the effect of their being taken advantage of by the State was simply to lower the rate of wages all round. He maintained that the pension for previous employment was the deferred pay of that employment; and if a man was in possession of a pension, he ought to be allowed to retain it without regard to the amount of wages he received in a new employment. If he was a fit man to be engaged in such skilled work as the making of gunpowder, the filling of shells, and the putting in of fuzes, he ought to receive a fair wage entirely irrespective of whether he received a pension or not. The effect in Plymouth and Devonport on the large number of these pensioners was that their specific wages were lower than 18s. and 16s. a week, and that had the effect of lowering the rate of wages throughout the whole district of the unfortunate men who were not in possession of pensions. The Secretary for War in his speech had referred to the advisability of studying economy. Well, economy in itself was a good thing, but they had been practising in the past an economy which was not a good thing. They had been perpetually economising the wages they paid to their poor servants, whilst they had been profuse in the salaries they paid to their wealthy servants. He did not think that to deal with this question of wages would necessitate any addition to the Navy Estimates, but he wanted to see an alteration effected—he wanted to see a satisfactory system of levelling up introduced. Whilst not seeking to abolish existing salaries, he thought that some consideration should be had for this the lowest and poorest class of public servants.

\*MR. JOHN BURNS (Battersea) said, he could not support the Amendment, which, if accepted by the Government, would not pledge them to do nearly as much as the late Government did or as the Government would in the near future be compelled to do—that was to say, to fix the Trades Union rates of wages in every district where Government Dockyards or works were established. The Amendment was vague in its terms and unsatisfactory in its application as far as

it would be possible to apply it. Two years ago the late Government accepted a Resolution declaring it to be their duty to make provision against the evils disclosed before the Sweating Committee by preventing sub-contracting and securing the wages generally accepted as current in each trade for competent workmen. The late Government authorised its officials to have attached to its specifications and contracts schedules of maximum and minimum rates of wages. This was more definite, less vague, and less elastic than the Amendment now before the House. As the Government had decided to accept the principle of the right hon. Gentleman's Amendment, he trusted that the right hon. Gentleman would see his way to withdraw it. If the right hon. Gentleman really meant what was stated in the Amendment, he (Mr. Burns) should have much pleasure in seconding a more drastic proposal on similar lines when the Report of the investigations of the Government into the hours, wages, and conditions of labour of the Dockyard men had been issued, if the right hon. Gentleman would make such a proposal. If the right hon. Gentleman was not willing to do so, he (Mr. Burns) would propose if the right hon. Gentleman would second it. He could not support the present Amendment, first, because the words "insufficient for a proper maintenance" might be variously interpreted by the Superintendents of each Government dépôt. A wage of 18s. a week might by the authorities in Chatham Dockyard be regarded as sufficient for proper maintenance, whilst at Devonport 20s. might be regarded as the minimum, and at Woolwich 21s. or 22s. As the rates varied considerably in different districts, it seemed to him that there was only one tribunal, to which the House, through its Dockyard Superintendents, could go—namely, the local Trades Unions, from which they would be able to obtain the rates which ordinary competition fixed outside Government establishments. For four years another Body with which he was connected—the London County Council—did that which the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Cambridge University now advised the House to do. They went in for "fair wages," and the result was that at every opportunity the contractors whom the Council had to deal

with interpreted fair wages as being those wages which, in their opinion, they could get their workmen to accept. The same thing would happen in regard to Government establishments if the right hon. Gentleman's Amendment were accepted. The officers of the London County Council had their time wasted and were constantly annoyed by discussions on the questions that were always cropping up; artificial and sensational grievances were submitted to the Council, and there was a perpetual waste of energy and money all round in consequence. In the end the Council found it better to get rid of the vague phrase "fair wages," and to adopt regulations of so plain and definite a character that they could not be misapprehended by either masters or men. It was decided—and the decision had since been adopted by nearly 100 other Bodies—that all contractors should be compelled to sign a declaration that they paid the Trades Union rate of wages and recognised the Trades Union conditions with regard to labour, and that the hours, wages, and conditions of labour should be inserted in and form part of the specifications. Having stated that what was sauce for the Council's own goose should also be sauce for the contractor's gander, they drew up a schedule of the wages paid by the Trades Unions in every district covered by the Council's operations. That schedule was to be found in the County Hall; the contractors had to observe it, as the County Council themselves observed it, in dealing with the men they themselves employed, and everyone could ascertain what the fixed rate of wages was. He suggested that the Government should follow the lead given by the London County Council, the London School Board, and nearly 100 other authorities by establishing a rate of wages according to the practice that prevailed in similar employments outside Government establishments. If they did this, all the difficulties which those who represented Dockyard constituencies had foreshadowed, if the present vague Amendment were passed, would be avoided. Why the right hon. Gentleman had connected insurance with hours and wages he could not possibly understand. The men in Government Dockyards wanted to have nothing to do with insurance at all at the present time. They were justly confining themselves

to the demand for a 48 hours working week, better pay, and the abolition of the piece work conditions that now prevailed to the detriment both of the men and of the work they did. The right hon. Gentleman had, in fact, overloaded his Amendment with so many things that he (Mr. Burns) had no course left to him but to vote for the Government, as they had accepted the principle of the proposal. He agreed with the right hon. Gentleman when he said that what the House of Commons had to do was to get good work even if that work were costly. He was convinced that it was the greatest mistake either in Woolwich Arsenal or Portsmouth Dockyard to employ unskilled labour on work which ought to be done by skilled workmen. It was a great mistake, for the sake of cheapness, to employ "handy men" or boys at lower wages than would be accepted by men engaged upon similar work in private establishments. He trusted that the classification, which was a source of constant annoyance, would be altogether abolished; that piece, job, and task work would be completely done away with; and that day work and hourly rates of wages would be established in their stead. Speaking as an engineer, he believed that at Woolwich Arsenal the Government had in their employment the cream of the workmen in the engineering trade of Great Britain and Ireland, notwithstanding many of the grievances which were so justly complained of. He trusted that Government employment would be extended to the entire exclusion of contractors. He was convinced of this: that if he were the captain of a battery in a hot corner in a foreign country he would rather have at his disposal machine-guns made in Woolwich Arsenal at day wages than guns manufactured on piece work conditions by a sub-contractor who sub-let his work to the men in his employ. It was a matter of positive advantage to the Army and Navy that the men who made our war implements should work under conditions which gave them good wages and reasonably short hours. There was no doubt that normally the hours in Dockyards and Arsenals were not particularly long, but unfortunately overtime was too prevalent, and he trusted that if the Government could not see its way to establish the 48 hours a week which

all the artisans in the Government Departments were now petitioning for, at all events overtime would be altogether abolished. He trusted, further, that the Secretary for War would follow up the promise he made to the deputation of Woolwich Arsenal men who waited on him some five months back by saying it was not decent that in the metropolitan district there should be 2,000 labourers living on less than 20s. a week, out of which they had in many cases to pay a third, and in most cases a fourth or a fifth, for house accommodation. He found that there were 4,500 men in Government yards earning less than 19s. a week, and that 1,037 men were earning as little as 15s. a week. Hundreds had been 12 or 14 years in the service of the Government without receiving more than from 15s. to 17s. a week. Was it possible when a man, especially a married man, had to pay 5s. or 6s. a week in rent, for him to live as a decent man should, and to do his work properly for his employer when the latter stupidly paid him such a rate of wages? As a matter of fact, many men who were employed in Woolwich Arsenal were prematurely ageing themselves, and the children of such men could not but be the miserable *cretins* one saw in walking about our streets. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Cambridge University had said there was no reason for our being afraid of foreign competition in this matter, as British workmen had no rivals. This was perfectly true; and he knew of no better way of attempting to solve the serious question of the unemployed, which every day, every month, and every year grew more serious, and which the House of Commons would have increasingly before it as time went on, than by abolishing overtime in our Dockyards and Arsenals, establishing a 48 hours week, and employing those who were at present unemployed in reproductive work in such Government establishments, instead of allowing them to be kept by the ratepayers in workhouses, infirmaries, or prison, or, worse than all, to loaf about and become a great burden to the community, a curse to themselves, and a disgrace to any country which called itself civilised. There was no need to fear any increase of cost if hours were shortened where machinery was an

auxiliary in production. He had in his hand a list of 13 large firms, employing about 10,000 amongst them, who had adopted the eight hours system. In these cases the eight hours day had not increased the cost of production to any appreciable extent. He believed the same thing would apply to all our Dockyards and Arsenals. Even if, however, the cost of production were slightly increased, as it might be where machinery was not used, the extra amount would be saved in other ways, as it would not be necessary to spend so much on supervision, and there would be a great gain in the general excellence of the work done. The Secretary for War (Mr. Campbell-Bannerman) had said they were dealing with the taxpayers' money, and consequently he could not go as far as the Amendment suggested. He should like to point out to the right hon. Gentleman that the taxpayers had increasingly of late had the opportunity of saying that they did not object to paying reasonable rates of wages, or working their men on fair terms and conditions, provided that the men who were engaged in public work gave something like a fair return for the wages paid. He believed that if the Government were to spend £1,000,000 in raising the wages of the men in our Arsenals and Dockyards—and he did not believe it would need £500,000 to bring them within reasonable distance of Trades Union rates—the amount so spent would act as an incentive for economy in other directions, and much useless official supervision would be dispensed with as being unnecessary under the new state of things. He did not think the House had any need to fear the “old pensioner,” who was as sympathetic an object with Government officials as was the “poor lone widow” with Boards of Guardians. There were at Woolwich not more than 600 pensioners altogether, and they were a diminishing quantity. The low rates of wages in our Arsenals and Dockyards were due to the fact that under the long service system inefficient men—men who had been maimed in war or otherwise in the Government Service—used to go into the Dockyards and Arsenals much too frequently. Many of these men were incapable of doing their work, and in any cases sympathy alone did

motion into Government establishments, and their rates of wages and pensions were made equal to the rates of wages which, without pensions, would be paid by private employers in similar establishments outside. There was a strong probability that the Woolwich Arsenal labourer who had got a keen eye to his own business would invoke the aid of the Municipal Authorities and ask the County Council (who would not rack-rent him in the way that the jerry-builder who exploited his low wages and poverty) to build his house. If that was not done, he saw no reason why the Government should not deal out to the Woolwich Arsenal labourer what had been dealt out to the agricultural labourer in Ireland—that was to say, establish a system of judicial rents for houses as well as for land. Whether this was done or not, he hoped the Government would reduce the hours down to 48; re-arrange, if not abolish, the classification altogether; do away with favouritism with a strong hand wherever they had an opportunity, and not allow it to be said this day six months that there were 4,500 men who were employed of the Government earning less than 19s. per week. He hoped the Secretary for War, in the interests of discipline and of systematic management of large establishments, would not advance Pembroke to the detriment of Devonport, would not advance Enfield at the expense of Woolwich, but in his new scheme would make for uniformity of wages, hours, and conditions of labour in all the establishments under the control of Her Majesty's Government. If that was done, he was sure great satisfaction would be given to the labourers. The Motion of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Cambridge University was vague and unsympathetic, because it did not touch the standard rate of wages or the hours of labour. He (Mr. Burns) hoped the Committee would support the Government as against the right hon. Gentleman; and if the result of their investigation was not so satisfactory as he anticipated, he reserved to himself the right to move an Amendment when the Report of the Committee was presented to make provision for that which County Councils, School Boards, and many other Bodies had insisted on—namely,

the payment of the Union rate of wages in the Government establishments.

\*MR. C. F. EGERTON ALLEN (Pembroke, &c.) said, he was glad to take the earliest opportunity afforded him of fulfilling one of the pledges which he gave to the constituents who did him the honour of returning him to Parliament to bring the grievances of the men employed in the Pembroke Dockyard before the House. The men employed by the Government were precluded from using the method of enforcing attention to their grievances which men in the service of private employers possessed—namely, the method of a strike—and they felt, and rightly felt, that for that reason they had a peculiar right to ask Parliament to consider their grievances. They came to the House, as being the authority who were, in fact, their employer, for the House governed the conditions on which Government employment was given. The grievances of the men employed in the Pembroke Dockyard were chiefly of two classes. There were the personal grievances which related to individual rates of pay, individual hours of labour, and individual retiring allowances and pensions; but he would not touch on these grievances. The only grievances which he intended to bring before the House were grievances relating to the system of employment in the Dockyards. He believed that the source of all the grievances felt in the Dockyards against the system was the way in which the administration of the Dockyards by the Admiralty was saturated by the ideas of discipline and service that prevailed in the Army and Navy. These ideas of the Naval Service were extended by the Admiralty to the industrial service. The Admiralty considered that their rule should be accepted without question by the men, and that all questionings by the men should be looked upon as mutiny to be rigorously put down. The Admiralty also considered that in order to keep up this state of strict discipline there should be a certain secrecy about their Rules and Regulations, and that these Rules and Regulations might be arbitrarily altered, if alteration was considered necessary. If the pledges given by the Secretary for War, that the terms and conditions of service in the Dockyards would be placed on the same footing as the terms and

conditions of service in the private yards, were carried out in their spirit most of the grievances of the men would be removed. But the first condition of the proper fulfilment of that pledge was the publication of the Rules of service; and also that all the men should be placed on the same equal footing—that there should be no differentiation between the men for the purpose of giving small rewards or inflicting small punishment, which was fatal to any feeling of independence on the part of the men. If the pledge of the Secretary of State for War was to be carried out in its spirit, the system of arbitrarily altering the Rules under which the men believed they were serving, without notice to the men prejudicially affected, or giving them the opportunity of having their say in the matter, should be stopped. No private employer would be allowed by his men to alter the regulations of the service prejudicially to the men, without giving the men the opportunity of being heard on the subject. The want of equality was the grievance of which the men greatly complained, while the system of classification remained in force in the Dockyards—men who did the same work did not get the same pay, and the difference in the rate of pay did not depend—as the men had reason to believe—on efficiency of work, but merely on the favouritism of the officials. No proper answer could be given to the criticisms of the men that favouritism alone could account for the fact that in the case of two men who did exactly the same work, one received more pay for doing it than the other. The scope of variation between the lowest and the highest rates of pay to the same workmen was very wide: boiler-makers were paid from 5s. 4d. to 6s. 8d. per day; fitters in the engine shed, 5s. 4d. to 7s. These variations led to bitter feeling amongst the men. They knew that the work done by all the men was the same; that the difference between the rates of pay of the men could not be justified by any public reason; that the reason was in the mind of the officer alone who recommended men for the higher or the lower rate of pay, and the men could not help feeling that that system opened the door of favouritism. The consequence of this system was, that the men were kept in a state of dependence, and were

expected to take thankfully irresponsible orders. Men in the Army and Navy must take irresponsible orders, but men engaged in industrial employments in the Dockyards were not in the same position, though the Admiralty seemed to think so. Then with regard to the system of secrecy which prevailed in the Dockyards; the system was carried on to the extent that the rules and conditions of employment were arbitrarily changed in secret, and the men who worked by the job and task method did not know how their pay was calculated. It was impossible for them to find out how it was calculated, as the rule was not published. It was true that before the men went to the pay table they knew the sum they were to receive as wages, but they did not know how that sum was calculated. Up to recently they did not know how much they were to receive until they went to the pay table. Now they did know how much they were to receive, but, as he had said, they did not know how it was calculated. If the pledge of the Secretary for War was to be carried out in its spirit, that system of secrecy must be abolished. A private employer would naturally have a schedule of wages of different kinds of work done on his premises, and the workmen would not tolerate any alteration in that schedule in secret, and without their being heard on the subject. He had received a copy of the Memorial which had been presented to the Lords of the Admiralty by the hand-rivettters in the Portsmouth Dockyard. The petitioners said—

“We respectfully pray your Lordships to draw up a list of prices to be paid for all kind of work when done by the piece or job, such lists to be exhibited in conspicuous place where the work is in process.”

And the petitioners went on to say that when engaged at the piece or job they did not know the rate at which they would be paid. This system of secrecy was one of the great grievances of the workmen in the Dockyards, and if it was removed it would do away with a great deal of the grumbling. As an illustration of the way in which the rules and conditions were altered in secret, he would mention that in November last the workmen, when they came to the pay-table on one Friday to

be paid their week's wages, found their wages reduced by 12½ per cent. This was probably done for the purpose of economy, but the men had got no notice of it, and they were given no reason why it was done, though the alteration made an enormous difference in their earnings, so much so that the reduction of 12½ per cent. brought down the earnings of the men engaged on job and task work to the regular rate of weekly wages or less. If the Admiralty were justified in reducing wages, the Admiralty should at least have given notice to the men of the proposed reduction. What private employer would reduce the wages of his men without a week's or a day's notice, and without giving them the slightest opportunity of being heard in the matter? There was another matter of which the workmen complained with regard to the rate of pension or retiring allowance. This pension or retiring allowance used to be calculated as a certain proportion of the last yearly rate of pay the men received; that was to say, they had a certain proportion of the annual earnings of the last year of their service. But in July last a man found that his retiring allowance did not represent the usual proportion of his last year's earnings, and on complaining he was told a new rule of which he had never heard a word before—and of which no notice had been given to any one—had come into practice, by which instead of calculating the retiring allowance on the last year's pay, it was calculated on the average of the last three years' pay. The House would see that that made a great difference to the workmen. That might be a good and justifiable rule, but his point was that the Admiralty had no right to bring into operation a rule of that kind without the slightest notice to the men affected, and it should be applied to the future only and not to the past. The men who suffered for that new regulation were the Pembroke men, for it seemed it did not affect the men at Portsmouth at all. How that might be he did not know, for there was no source from which the rate of wages, and pensions, and retiring allowance could be ascertained and subjected to examination. He would impress most strongly on the Admiralty the advisability of issuing some code of rules and con-

ditions of service for the men employed in the dockyards. Such a code existed in the police service; every policeman entering the service had put before him a short summary of the conditions of service. No such code or draft and conditions of service existed in Her Majesty's dockyards. If the Admiralty wished to be in line with other Departments of the State they should publish the code of rules which regulated the employment of the workmen, the allowance of the pensions of the men, and that code should not be altered without giving the men full opportunity of presenting their views on the proposed alteration to the Admiralty. There was now the objectionable system in the Pembroke yards of not rating the men according to the work they performed—that was to say, a man, instead of being rated as a skilled labourer, though he might be a skilled labourer, and doing the work of a skilled labourer, would be rated as temporarily employed at skilled work. The words “temporarily employed” were used in order to deprive men of the rating to which they were entitled. Men were temporarily employed in this way for 16 years. The men were not temporarily employed in the place of other people; they were doing actual, permanent, and substantial work, and they, therefore, ought to be rated on permanent substantial pay. It was very hard on these men that they should have to do work of a certain class, and not be rated at the full pay for that class of work. This went on in several cases for years and years, and the men, if employed by private employers, would have been paid according to the work they did. There were cases of men employed for years who were called “acting stokers”; these so-called acting stokers were actually doing the work of permanent stokers, but they were not paid the full rate of stokers' wages. Then, again, skilled labourers acted as furnace men, skilled labourers acted as casting trimmers; but they got a low rate of pay in consequence of being called skilled labourers, and when they were discharged out of the service they were discharged as skilled labourers only, and being discharged as skilled labourers they found it difficult to get the same rate of pay in other places from private em-

ployers as they would have got had they been discharged as riveters, stokers, furnace men, and casting trimmers, which they really were, and at which class of work they were really employed in the dockyards. He hoped these matters would be taken into consideration by the Admiralty, and the grievances of which the men complained be at once remedied.

MR. FORWOOD (Lancashire, Ormskirk): I do not think there is any Member of the House but who will agree with the spirit of the Amendment proposed by my right hon. Friend the Member for the University of Cambridge. And, Sir, on behalf of the late Administration at the Admiralty, I claim that the conditions therein set out were more than fulfilled by the Board presided over by my noble Friend (Lord G. Hamilton). I perfectly agree with the very many strong, sound, common-sense remarks of the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary of State for War. He asked, and very properly, should the Government force the hand of the private employer? In other words, should the Government, by setting up an unnecessary and unusually high scale of pay, force the cost of dockyard work in the country generally to such a pitch that private enterprise could not compete, and to the detriment of the shipbuilding interests of the country? Then, again, he made a remark which I think ought to be felt, and I have no doubt is felt, by the great majority of this House. He reminded the House that we were dealing with other people's money, and that it was not right to gain credit at the cost of the people. He also twitted my right hon. Friend the Member for Cambridge University with having said that it did not matter particularly to the State whether the cost of a ship was 3 or 4 per cent. more, provided the State paid to its *employés* what he would term a satisfactory rate of wage. Now, Sir, that doctrine is no doubt very good, very plausible, and sounds very well. But I would suggest to hon. Members for dockyard constituencies, who have this evening so strongly pressed the claims of their constituencies upon the attention of the House—I would suggest for their consideration this point: that there are many places round the country—the Thames, the Tyne, the Clyde, Belfast,



the Mersey, Hull—all competent and able to construct vessels of war in a first-class manner. Now, the aim of the dockyard officers has been by diligence and good spirit at the dockyards to compete favourably with the private enterprise at the various dockyards, to compete favourably with the private enterprise at these various dockyards. There are a certain number of voters in Pembroke, Devonport, Portsmouth, Chatham, and Sheerness. But, Sir, where there are a hundred voters at these Dockyard ports, there are thousands of voters on the Tyne, the Mersey, the Clyde, at Hull and elsewhere, and I submit to hon. Members who represent dockyard constituencies that if by their over-pressure upon the Government they so raise the price of building ships at the Dockyards, no future Board of Admiralty will be able to come to this House, and in face of the representatives of the great shipbuilding ports propose to give orders to Her Majesty's Dockyards for ships at a much higher cost than they could build them at Hull or on the Clyde, or elsewhere. These are very serious considerations for those who represent Dockyard constituencies to consider. I am satisfied that the thousands of men in the northern ports of this country will not sit idly by doing nothing when they see men competing for work—men at these Dockyards who hold what are practically hereditary positions—see these men obtaining this work on far better terms than they themselves are willing to do the work for. There was another remark of the Secretary for War with which I fully concur. He said the area of this inquiry must be extended; that it could not be limited simply to the *employés* under the Board of Admiralty. That was one of the difficulties which my noble Friend and the Admiralty had to contend with. If we proposed what we thought would be an improvement in the position of the dockyardsmen in regard to the details of their employment, we were instantly met with the objection that there were 150,000 or 200,000 men in other branches of the public service who would also have to be considered, and whose case would be affected by any change or alteration in the status of the dockyard men. The Secretary of State for War complained that the Amendment of my

*Mr. Forwood*

right hon. Friend was not specific; that it was capable of any interpretation that any one individual might choose to put upon it. Well, Sir, I think the Amendment is open to that criticism, but I think the speech of my right hon. Friend was open to no such criticism. My right hon. Friend was very clear. He said that the rate of wages in the Dockyard shall be trades union wages, the hours of work trades union hours, and then he added to these trades union wages and hours that the State ought to provide some machinery for insurance and old-age pensions. Now I think my right hon. Friend was very specific and fair in what he wanted, and what he meant by his Resolution. But, Sir, I am inclined to think that the Secretary of State for War was even more vague in his remarks than even the wording of my right hon. Friend's Resolution. As far as I could gather, he said he accepted the Resolution in a sense which he would give to it, and that sense, as I understood it, was that he would not go ahead of the private firms in regard to pay—that he would endeavour to keep abreast of it. But, Sir, he very skilfully evaded the burning question which underlies the whole of our discussion to-night, that is, Is the rate of pay at the Dockyards to be regulated by the trades union scale or not? The Secretary to the Admiralty is probably going to follow me, and I have no doubt he will tell me that what the Secretary of War meant by keeping abreast of private employers is that we are going to establish in Her Majesty's Dockyards a trades union system of pay and of hours. I would remark in passing that that means an advance of £125,000 or £150,000 a year to dockyardsmen at the least, if not more. Now, Sir, I asked the Secretary to the Admiralty a question across the Table of this House a few days ago—whether he would take any money in the Estimates for any change in the rates of pay of dockyardsmen, and I understood him to say no; therefore I understand it is perfectly clear that no change in the present rate of pay to the men is to take place in the current financial year.

SIR UGHTRED KAY-SHUTTLEWORTH: It does not follow.

MR. FORWOOD: My right hon. Friend opposite says it does not follow. I

of Commons is asked to vote money to be expended in the construction of ships in the Dockyards, the least the Board of Admiralty can do is to lay on the Table particulars of the additions, if any, they propose to make in the different classes of pay in the Dockyards. It happened that two years ago the late Board of Admiralty took up this question, which I shall shortly allude to. We put specifically on the Estimates the extra sum of money we intended to expend in improving the status and pay of the men in the Dockyards. I claim, as due to the practice of the House and Constitutional usage, that we should be informed what we are asked to vote the money for, and should be given particulars in connection with these *employés*. Before I pass to details, I wish to allude to one matter which makes the administration of any public Department in this country most difficult, and that is the political question. All who were Members of the late House of Commons know how continually Ministers in charge of great public spending Departments were, night after night, troubled by questions of supposed grievances of men in some department or other of the public service. Now, Sir, I am glad to say that two right hon. Gentlemen, the present Prime Minister and the Chancellor of the Exchequer, supported my right hon. Friends in their endeavour to check this undue pressure being brought into the House of Commons, to the detriment of the effective management of the public service of the country. To give an idea what this means I will quote the remarks of a shipwright at Chatham, who I have no doubt has been heard by one of my right hon. Friends or hon. Friends opposite with reference to the claims of the Chatham shipwright to greater benefits in the shape of pay and emoluments. The late Admiralty felt, as the Secretary for War very properly expressed it, that we were the custodians and trustees of the public purse; that we would do what was right and just, and that the question of politics should not influence us one iota to the right or to the left. One of these gentlemen who interviewed me, and who I have no doubt interviewed the right hon. Gentleman or his Colleague—Mr. Wilsford—made a speech at Chatham just before the Election last year, and what was spoken at one yard

may be taken as a sentiment of all the yards, for there is a wonderful combination between yard and yard. The memorials which are sent up annually to the Admiralty are positively printed at the same printers and distributed among the yards, so that each may sign the same document. This gentleman—Mr. Wilsford—in his speech said—

“He felt everything was in their favour. The great question looming in the immediate future was the General Election. His experience taught him that if they wanted a favour done they must extend temporary reciprocity. They would know what to do when candidates for Parliamentary honours canvass for votes, and they should induce those gentlemen to help them in this crisis of their history.”

That indicates one reason why a majority have come to this House of five representatives from Dockyard seats—not on the question put before the country, but simply on this question of personal politics. Now, Sir, the hon. Member for Devonport (Mr. Kearley), speaking to his constituents in July last, described the Government as

“The champion sweaters of the country. It seemed the Government were never satisfied without it was taking something away from the wage-earning classes. They demanded that classification should be abolished to the smallest degree, and if they were returned to Westminster they would keep pegging away until it was abolished.”

Then he went on to say that if he and his Colleague were returned to Parliament they would not be satisfied until there was a general rise of wages throughout all our Government establishments. Now, Sir, I have read these remarks to the House and to the public for this purpose—that they must know naturally that the Members from the Dockyards are returned here to urge the claims of their constituents to more of the taxpayers' money rather than from any question of great political importance. I ventured to say that the administration of the Admiralty under my noble Friend had fully fulfilled the proposals in my right hon. Friend's Amendment. It has been said to-night that the late Board increased the wages at the Admiralty by a sum of something like £80,000, and they left those Dockyards in such a good state of organisation and management that the noble Lord who now presides over the Admiralty says—

and I thank him for the handsome acknowledgment—

“That the speedy and economical construction of this vessel” (alluding to a certain vessel) “affords good evidence of the efficient condition and organisation of the Royal Dockyards.”

It was my lot annually to inquire into the grievances I had heard retailed here to-night for something like six years, and in 1890, at the request of my noble Friend, I spent a considerable time at each of the Dockyards and inquired minutely into the wants and necessities and the grievances of the men. I endeavoured to do this in as thorough a manner as possible. No less than 224 petitions from various trades and groups of men, and in some six cases from individuals, had been presented to the Admiralty. I heard the evidence of no less than 500 witnesses in support of these petitions, which affected something like 20,900 men at the various Dockyards. Of these 5,500 were established, and 15,400 hired men. Of this total 12,700 were artisans, 4,300 were skilled labourers, and 3,900 ordinary labourers. I am sorry we had to mention again the grievances which had been already alluded to, but I had to consider them at the time. These were the hired time not counting towards a pension, the pension being lost if a man did not attain the pension age; and last, but not least, better wages. I ought to say to my right hon. Friend who advocated trades union hours of labour that the Dockyards very closely follow the trades union hours. The average of the hours worked at the Dockyards during the year amount to 50½, the average hours throughout the private trade at the northern ports being something like 54. Let us look at this matter from another point of view. I think a word has to be said for those who pay the wages—the taxpayers. I think they are entitled to some consideration, and I think it is but right to set out clearly before the House what are the advantages which the men in the Dockyards enjoy. They have practically continuous employment. They lose nothing, as they do in private yards, in the shape of broken time by reason of bad weather. My noble Friend, with the object of ensuring this continuous employment and the economical administration of the Dockyards—to enable the Dockyards to produce their ships at a price which

would fairly compete with those in private yards—introduced his Naval Defence Act. Under that Act he provided for a continuous, progressive rate of shipbuilding, year in, year out; so that you could employ a given number of men in each year, and avoid frequent and spasmodic discharge of men, and secure to them a constant, continuous employment. The noble Lord now at the head of the Admiralty points out very strongly in his Paper presented to the House that this insurance of economical and continuous employment of different trades in the Royal Dockyards is a matter of great importance in order to avoid those spasmodic discharges and subsequent re-entries of workmen which have taken place in former days with great disadvantage to the Service and to the men themselves. All that change was avoided under my noble Friend's Naval Defence Act, and I say that that Act was in the spirit of the Amendment moved by my right hon. Friend the Member for Cambridge University. This continuous employment cannot be obtained from private firms who depend altogether for their work upon the commercial wants of the country. The commercial wants of a country depend very largely upon the confidence of the country in the Administration in power. There are other points that are not to be forgotten in connection with this question of the position of the men in Dockyards compared with those in private yards, and that is the opportunity they have to take apprentices, and these apprentices their own sons. In fact, Sir, the Dockyard service is almost an hereditary service. The men have not to seek work from town to town, or post to post, and change their home every time a shipbuilder becomes short of work, but they are on the spot, and have the certainty of regular and continuous work. Again, with regard to these young men who are taken on as apprentices, and who become shipwrights, special facilities are given for their education in the Dockyard. The Naval College is open to them at Greenwich, and if they show efficiency and good conduct, they have an opportunity of promotion to draughtsmen, to writers, to leading men of trades, to foremen constructors, nay, even to chief constructor in the yard, so that the dockyards offer a chance to an industrious man who is willing to

push himself on that is not to be found in a private yard. Something has been said about what was called the paltry gratuities on discharge. I should like to know of any private yard in this country that gives a man any gratuity at all when it has to discharge him in consequence of want of work. Formerly until a change was made by my noble Friend these gratuities in the Dockyard were not payable until a man had served 20 years there. We altered that so that a man who has served seven years becomes entitled to a gratuity. Then, Sir, some remarks were made as to hurt money. If a man meets with an accident and cannot work he for a period receives half-pay. Again, if a man is taken sick in the yard his place is not immediately filled up by some other sound man being brought in; but the vacancy is very considerably kept open so that when the man recovers he may obtain the place he formerly occupied. I now come to another matter in connection with the Dockyards, and that is the question of establishment. I did not gather from the Secretary for War whether he really was in favour or not of an establishment. He complained of my right hon. Friend being vague in his Amendment; but I think the right hon. Gentleman was a little more visionary in his comment and suggestions as to what the Government would do. I am quite at a loss to know whether he looks upon the question of an establishment as an advantage or otherwise. He has not stated whether he would have all men in a Public Department from the day he entered its employment treated as hired men liable to be dismissed whenever work ceased, and liable to have their occupation determined when their strength fails, or whether he was in favour of maintaining an establishment of men something on the lines which at present obtain in the Dockyards. Well, Sir, we found an establishment, we continued that establishment, and what we endeavoured to do was to put that establishment on a fair, honest, and reasonable basis to the men who belonged to it. The establishment means that when a man reaches the age of 65 and wishes to retire he can claim a pension at the rate of 1-60th of his average income for the previous three years, for the number of years on which he has been on the establishment; and if he is fit for work

he may even go on in full pay to 65 until he becomes then established. We found that the establishment bore very unfairly upon many classes of the workmen, and especially upon the lowest class. The hired shipwrights, for example, when placed on the establishment were established at from 1s. to 2s. a week below that which they obtained when on the hired list, whilst the boiler-makers sacrificed by the change from 2s. 6d. to 3s. a week. The boiler makers would be receiving 6s. a day. But when we come to the skilled labourer what do we find? Every skilled labourer to become established had to sacrifice 4s. and 4s. 6d. a week on wages of something like 24s. or 24s. 6d. a week. Every one will admit that that was most unjust, and the first step my noble Friend took was to remedy these cases of injustice. Our desire was to arrange a fixed deduction, having reference to the benefits which the men were to derive, and our difficulty was that we could not make this a special case in regard to the Dockyards, because if a change were made it must be made to apply to all other great departments of State. Here comes in the strength of my right hon. Friend's Amendment. He desired to systematise the age at which pension-money, hurt money, and insurance should be granted. In that I am quite at one with him. We have met these cases as far as we could, and without going into detailed figures we practically gave the men the benefit of one-half of what they had been previously paying. That is if a man had been paying 3s. a week to go on to the establishment, the scheme which we propounded and which was carried into effect in 1892 reduced the sacrifice the workmen made by at least one-half. And we also made our deduction have reference to the wages that a man received, so that from the man who was receiving a higher rate of pay a larger sum was required than from the ordinary labourer who was receiving a lower rate of pay. We are told by one hon. Gentleman opposite that we (the late Admiralty) had been guilty of gross injustice and maladministration, and the proof of our gross injustice and maladministration was this—that although a sum was deducted from a workman in consideration of a pension to be paid to him when he attained 60 years of age, if

he died at 59 all the deductions that had been made were forfeited, and his representatives received no benefit whatever. If the hon. Member had exercised a little common-sense he must have felt and known that if you are to deduct from men an annual sum in consideration of an annual annuity to be paid on a certain age, there is a great difference in the case of the charge which must be made to these men if you undertake only to pay an annuity to them if they attained that age, than if you undertake to pay a sum in consideration thereof, even if they died 10 or 15 years before they arrived at that age. I perfectly agree that it is a selfish and mean system of pension which prevails at the Admiralty and in the public service generally, but especially in connection with the Dockyard men, for in consideration of this pension a deduction is made directly from a man's wage, and if he prematurely dies his widow and family are thrown upon the tender mercies of the Union or charged upon their friends and relatives. That is a sad state of affairs, and, therefore, again I say my right hon. Friend is right in his contention that it is not merely a question of inquiry into this Dockyard matter that is wanted, but an inquiry into the whole system of Civil Service Pension, and to see whether the system of pension by which a man protected himself but left his wife and family unprovided for ought to be terminated. A very erroneous impression prevails at the Dockyard as to the number of men who attain the pensionable age. Generally speaking, it is said that 10 per cent. of the men do not reach the pensionable age. It was also said that no actuarial calculations had been published. Before I went on my mission to the Dockyards I took the precaution to get from the National Debt Commissioners an actuarial calculation as to the cost of the pensions to the Dockyard men, and they gave me these figures: That out of 442 men who in a given period of time would have been entitled to a pension in Portsmouth Dockyard only 83 had died; and therefore out of 442 no less than 80 per cent., or 359, attained and obtained pensions. They went on further to say that the cost of pensions in the case of the men was  $9\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. of their wages, and in the case of the officers  $13\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. Perhaps the House will

permit me to read a letter from a very intelligent man I met at Pembroke. He is a gentleman who very much engaged in the agitation upon the question of Dockyard grievances, and when I saw him he had represented to me what a very few workmen had attained the pensionable age. Subsequently, a few days afterwards, he wrote me this letter, which I think does him credit and throws a light on this matter. He says—

"In my statement to you I argued that only 5 per cent. of workmen lived to secure pensions, and that the average duration of life subsequently is eight years. In this, as a consequence of insufficient opportunity to prepare myself, I merely adopted a traditional belief common to workmen, and though I uttered it in good faith, honestly believing it to be an approximation to the truth, I feel it to be my duty to the right hon. Gentlemen who constitute the Committee to state that for the reason assigned I had not made a personal investigation of its accuracy, but having been informed by you that a reliable body of actuaries have made computations widely differing in the result from that submitted by me, I have since made the matter a subject of inquiry, and I have satisfied myself that the percentage of workmen who survive till 60 years of age cannot possibly be less than 11 or 12 times that assumed by me. I make an aggregate of 2s. 11d., or, approximately, 10 per cent. of our wages as against the 8d. submitted in my original statement."

That, curiously, bears out the calculations which were given to me by the National Debt Commissioners. Now, Sir, so much, I think, can be said, that while the cost of the pension system, as at present arranged, is nearly 10 per cent., the country charges these men only 5 per cent. The next point raised is that the hired time is not counted as service for a pension. Now, whilst a man is on the hired list, as a rule he obtains a higher rate of pay; he is perfectly free to leave if he can obtain better pay elsewhere, whilst a man on the establishment is fixed and cannot leave to better himself. If it is thought that the hired time should count for pension, then clearly the rate of pay of such hired men must be regulated with the prospect of pension in future. I now come to the question of classification. Nearly every trade at the Dockyard was classified—that is, they received a graduated rate of pay. One of the trades, and the trade that has made the greatest commotion over this matter, was the established shipwrights. The estab-

lished shipwrights formerly received a uniform rate of 5s. per day, and whether they had been in the service for five or 20 years, they arrived at a dull uniformity, and they could not obtain a higher rate of pay except upon promotion as foremen. For the first two or three years on my visits to the dockyards these men came to me and complained of this dull, dead, uniform level which they had arrived at without hope or prospect or chance of advancing, and they asked could nothing be done for them. That was the condition of matters up to 1890. Then I went to the dockyards and I saw the shipwrights. The uniform request from each yard was that the Admiralty would establish, not a uniform rate of pay, but a graduated rate of pay for every man in the yard, to be 5s. at the commencement and 7s. per day at the end of 10 years. Now comes the point when differences arose. They asked that the increment should be servitude; we said that the increment shall be servitude, plus merit; and that is the whole difference at the present time. I submit, with every confidence to the House, that with every man—the best men in the world, if they have hope that by their diligence they will improve their position in life, they have a greater incentive to work than they have if they know that after going a dull round for a certain number of years they will attain to but the same level. The objection which has been raised to this system of increment by servitude, plus merit, to-night is that favouritism would come in. Now, who are the men who, in the first instance, have to recommend the workmen for promotion? They are the very workmen themselves, or rather the very men who probably last year were workmen themselves. They are the inspectors, the shipwrights, and such like at the head of gangs who initiate the promotion by recommending the names of those who are most efficient in their gang. To call it favouritism is to show you do not trust yourselves. The Admiralty took care that this question of favouritism should be guarded against, and after setting out how a man can earn incremented pay, they say—

“In making such selection, competency, diligence, and conduct are to be regarded as of primary importance, due consideration also

being given to length of service; and, further, the recommendations to the Admiral Superintendent for promotion or increment of pay are to be accompanied by a list of the names of those men having a longer service in their respective class or trade, who are not nominated for advancement. Workmen thus passed over are at liberty to submit their case in writing for the consideration of the Admiral Superintendent.”

As regards this question of establishment and classification there is a matter of especial importance. When you tell the established men that “come weal come woe, you, for the rest of your natural life are to have constant regular employment;” you put that man on a fixed rate of pay and what inducement, what encouragement, has he to do more than merely pass through in a perfunctory manner his day’s labour. No, Sir, it is an immense advantage to the State that a Dockyard officer should have the opportunity of rewarding those men who show diligence, especially as regards the established men. On this question of classification, let me read the opinion of the smiths and engineers of the Dockyards. The gentleman who spoke on their behalf said—

“As a trade we declined to have anything to do with the meetings as we believed in the system of classification, and we thought that any other mode of payment to our own trade would be unfair, and consequently we kept from the meetings.”

In a deputation from the engineers an engineer said—

“They wish that the chief of the department should have the option and power from time to time to reward exceptionally good men by a rise of pay. Under the present arrangement they are not able to do that. In addition to that, the chief of the department might be able to remunerate an exceptionally deserving man from time to time.”

We think that should be the case. Speaking to me, he said—

“You, as a business and practical man, must know that some men are worth more than others from their experience, and from the trouble of their lives, they are worth more to the service, and from their experience from having been with you, and from the time they have served in the yard themselves, which enhances the value of the men.”

That is an opinion from the highest class of trades in the yard. Now this matter not only affects the men them-

selves, but it affects the administration of the yard, and before my right hon. Friend determines upon this question of doing away with the classification of the yards, I want to ask him this: Whether he is prepared to fly absolutely in the face of those who are responsible for the good working of the yard and to do away with the classification. His Chief Constructor of Dockyards will tell him that—

“Classification of skilled labour is as essential in that as in any other body of workmen, not in the interests of the Service, but in the interests of the men themselves.”

The Civil Assistant at Portsmouth tells him—

“I would give no limit as regards the services in advancement. Everything should be by merit.”

The Chief Assistant at Chatham says—

“I much prefer classification. It would enable specially expert workmen being rewarded, advancement being generally considered due to ability and servitude.”

The Civil Assistant at Devonport says—

“Most certainly prefer a graduated scale to a uniform scale.”

If uniformity and not classification is to prevail the question will have to be answered: are you going to put the highest down to the lowest, or bring the lowest up to the highest? And if my right hon. Friend is going to put the lowest of the shipwrights up to the highest scale of trade union wages he will have to apply the same treatment to the fitters, the boiler makers, engineers, and every man in the yard, and apply the same system all through the yard. I ask my right hon. Friend to communicate with the Treasury, where he will find the price he has to buy peace at the Dockyard, and the Dockyard vote is not going to cost very much more than £1,000,000 of money as the capital sum which the taxpayers of this country will be called upon to pay? I will ask him another question, whether he is going to adopt the Trades Union rate of pay? Which pay will he adopt? It may be one rate at one port, and another rate at another. Another question is the question of trade union payment. We have heard it asked here that the men will not be satisfied unless

they have this system of payment introduced. I would ask those who advocate the trade union payment of wages in their yards:—Are you going to shift your rates of pay up and down according to the opinion prevailing in the country? Are you going to adopt a sliding scale? If you are going to do that, then I can say that I do not know how the Dockyards could ever be administered by such a system. I believe it would involve you in difficulties, and I believe that great dissatisfaction would result if any such system were allowed to prevail. I come now to the close of my observations. I come to a class of men who are always outside trade organisations, and they are a class who, I think it will be admitted, are entitled to great consideration on the part of this House. I mean, of course, the ordinary labourers. They have no organisation, and they have nobody to speak for them. Ordinary labourers received only 15s. per week when the late Government came into power, and it was told us by the officers that they could get as many men as they wanted for the money. We had an extraordinary illustration of the willingness of men to accept employment at that figure in the management of the Works Department. The men were employed, when we came in, at 10 hours a day. We employed them, as I have said, 10 hours a day, and gave them 15s. per week. Well, we made inquiry, and as a result of that inquiry we reduced the hours of labour from 10 to eight, and we raised the rate of pay from 15s. to 17s. for a man who had served 21 years, and then, after a year's probation, if he gave satisfaction, we decided to raise him to 18s. If the House will allow me to refer to one more abstract this will close my argument. Whatever may be the inducements which tempt men to enter the service at 15s. per week, the pay is, I submit, too low. We should not too strictly apply economic doctrines and take advantage of the hard position of the applicants, or the number of the unemployed, and the prospective advantages of our service, to pay a rate of wage to an adult labourer that will not afford, even to the most frugal, a decent house and adequate food. There is no more difficult question to solve than to determine what is the dividing line in the cost of a

workman's maintenance or comfort with thrift, and that which will not provide reasonable necessities and deencies of life. Considering that our employ is in large towns, where rents are comparatively high, and looking at the rate paid for unskilled labour by other employers connected with shipbuilding and manufacturing industries, including the Royal Factories at Woolwich, I consider that in none of Her Majesty's establishments should we enter men of over 21 years of age at less than 17s. per week, and that after two years' service they should receive 18s. If not worth the advance the men should not be retained. Ordinary labourers discharged on reduction ought, if afterwards re-engaged, to receive their former rate of pay. The authorised scale for the ordinary labourer should also allow of advances, by increments of 2d. per day, from 18s. to 20s. per week, in the discretion of the officers, regulated according to the class of work and skill of the man. I would add to that that it is impossible to compare dockyard labour with ordinary riverside labour, which is much longer in point of hours, and is also much harder, and which involves a greater amount of wear and tear. When we went into the question we took a period of five years as our standard—1886-1890—and we found that it was impossible to have a sliding scale, and that the best way was to have a scale of the highest and lowest rates in the country, and then act on a principle which would give the rates I have already mentioned. The Member for Devonport quotes certain figures, but I think he will discover that we effected a considerable improvement, and that we left the dockyard labourers in a much better position than they were when we entered Office. I think I may say that we of the late Admiralty Board did our duty. We did not only what was right and just to the men, but also what was right and just to that larger Body, that very important Body—the taxpayers of the country.

\*THE SECRETARY TO THE ADMIRALTY (Sir U. KAY-SHUTTLEWORTH, Lancashire, Clitheroe): I do not rise to take up the time of the House, my right hon. Friend the Secre-

tary of State for War having already explained the course to be taken by Her Majesty's Government, and having admitted that some of the rates of wages are too low, and explained that we are inquiring into the various rates of pay of the various classes of men in the Naval establishments. My right hon. Friend opposite asks me a large number of questions. I will resist the temptation of following my right hon. Friend through many of the points he has raised. Moreover, the inquiry which the Government have undertaken has only begun. The Civil Lord of the Admiralty and myself have visited the various dockyards and received a large number of deputations and petitions. I think the House will agree that it would be very unwise, before the inquiry is complete, and the vast mass of information has been digested, to announce any decision. The right hon. Gentleman condemns in strong terms the pension system. Why did not his Government alter it?

MR. FORWOOD: I explained that the system affects the whole Civil Service of the country.

SIR U. KAY-SHUTTLEWORTH: The right hon. Gentleman and the Administration of which he was a member had six years in which to effect a change. It has been urged that no change in wages is to be effected, because nothing appeared in the Estimates. It is obvious that proposals must be made, but it is impossible to put anything into the Estimates before a decision has been arrived at. The hon. Member for Portsmouth (Mr. Baker) has recognised that we are completing our inquiries and shall act upon the result. He has stated that he and other Members representing Dockyard constituencies are content to wait for the result of the inquiry. The very fact that such a mass of evidence had been brought forward increases the difficulty of prompt action; it will take a great deal of time to go through the voluminous evidence, which is only just in type. The views of all hon. Members interested in this matter having been heard so fully, I think I may now suggest that the Debate be brought to a close. The Government has accepted the Motion of



the right hon. Gentleman, and the Admiralty will be responsible to the House for giving effect to the Resolution which, I hope, will now be allowed to pass, so that you, Sir, may leave the Chair, and the Navy Estimates may be considered in Committee of Supply.

SIR EDWARD CLARKE (Plymouth): I do not think that the speech of the right hon. Gentleman has contributed greatly to the completeness of the discussion. I am not anxious to press the Government unfairly on some of the matters which have been referred to, but the right hon. Gentleman laid down a curious proposition—that the larger the amount of evidence in favour of a change, the more difficult was it to come to a decision.

SIR U. KAY-SHUTTLEWORTH: The evidence is in favour of about 50 changes.

SIR E. CLARKE: Well, if there is a great deal of evidence in favour of a large number of changes—50 changes—you are hardly entitled to say that you cannot come to a decision on any one. This process of inquiry has been going on now for seven or eight months. It has been going on ever since the Government has been in Office, and we might fairly hope for a decision now; but there is one matter of supreme importance to all the dockyards upon which I hope a decision will be come to at once. It is the system of classification. I am aware that it is due to the late Government; but it is an improvident and unwise system, which must be amended sooner or later. The men are all dissatisfied about it. Exactly the same class of work is being done by men of the same length of service and of the same character, some of whom receive 30s. a week, others 31s., and yet others 32s. It is a great and serious grievance, and I hope it will be attended to, and that the Government will come promptly to a conclusion with regard to this system of classification.

Question put, and negatived.

Words added.

Main Question, as amended, put, and agreed to.

*Sir U. Kay-Shuttleworth*

Resolved, That, in the opinion of this House, no person should, in Her Majesty's Naval establishments, be engaged at wages insufficient for a proper maintenance, and that the conditions of labour as regards hours, wages, insurance against accident, provision for old age, &c., should be such as to afford an example to private employers throughout the country.

Resolved, That this House will immediately resolve itself into the Committee of Supply.—(*Sir Ughtred Kay-Shuttleworth.*)

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair."

#### WARRANT OFFICERS IN THE NAVY.

\*MR. KEARLEY (Devonport) said, he wished to trespass on the time of the House for a few minutes in order to draw attention to certain grievances under which warrant officers in the Navy suffered. First of all he should explain, for the benefit of those who might not be conversant with the details of the matter, that there were two classes of warrant officers, executive and non-executive. The former comprised gunners and boatswains; the latter carpenters and head schoolmasters. The executive warrant officers were drawn from the entire seaman class; but the non-executive were drawn from two classes only—carpenters from naval shipwrights, and head schoolmasters from, of course, naval schoolmasters. None of the other non-executive ratings had access to the warrant rank, and, as they comprised in addition to shipwrights and schoolmasters—numbering only 2,000—14,000 stokers and engine room artificers, and a remainder of 2,500 working at various trades, and clerical and domestic duties, it was felt an anomalous hardship that 16,500 of the rank and file were denied the possibility of aspiring to anything above a petty officer's rating. This, however, he merely mentioned in passing, for it was with regard to the existing warrant officers he wished to speak. Now, he would first of all refer to the duties and responsibilities of the warrant officers, and then endeavour to point out to the House the barren prospects that were open to them as a reward for the splendid services they rendered. Their duties were in every

case most responsible ones. For instance, the whole of the munitions of war and stores on board Her Majesty's ships, with a few trifling exceptions, were in their charge, and for the safety and correct accounting of these they were held fully responsible. The qualifying examination for warrant rank was a tough one, and in the case of gunners entailed a course of mathematical study as well as practical gunnery which occupied some 18 months to prepare for. Beyond this, gunners, and likewise boatswains, had frequently to discharge, and they did so with the highest efficiency, all the practical duties of lieutenants who were trained at a high cost to the country. They took their turn at watch-keeping with lieutenants and sub-lieutenants, and whereas the commissioned officer, when he came off his watch, was free and at ease, the warrant officer had further onerous duties to perform, such as instructing in gunnery and seamanship, and certain clerical duties in connection with his store accounts. Of late years they had been frequently told off to take sole command of smaller vessels, in all of which duties no one, in discussing their demands for some higher recognition of their status, had ever ventured to question the high efficiency of their ability. What were their present prospects? The average age on promotion was 27; but a large number of men secured the rank from 24 years and upwards, and although the obtaining of it could only be accomplished by sheer hard work and constant study and application—to say nothing of the *sine quâ non* of a faultless character—there was absolutely no further step of promotion possible to gain until a man reached 50 years of age, when he secured the rank of chief of the particular class to which he belonged, which carried with it the barren honour, considering the late period at which it arrived, of an honorary commission ranking, however, after all other commissioned officers, including the sub-lieutenant of yesterday's creation, who was unborn at the time the "ranker" secured his warrant. He was told that at this moment there were grey-headed warrant officers serving who had during the last 20 years prepared for their gunnery and seamanship examinations necessary to the attainment of their commissions

the captain, the commander, and some of the lieutenants under whom they were serving; and whereas the flow of promotion had been steady and continuous for the commissioned officers, the warrant officers had remained all these years limited to the warrant rank. Was it to be wondered at that those who had entered the warrant rank full of zeal and youthful energy sickened with mortification and despair at the class prejudice which denied them any step in promotion for a quarter of a century? True, they received at intervals some increase of pay, but, at the best, a paltry pittance when compared to their valuable work, and these increments were in diminishing ratio to the period served, which amounted to this: that the longer the service, and, naturally, the greater the experience, the less recognition awarded by the Admiralty. The demands, as formulated by the warrant officers, were exceedingly modest—in his opinion quite too much so. They wanted it made possible for them to attain the honorary commissioned rank of chief, not when they were getting old and losing ambition, but at an average age of 35 to 37 years; that was to say, after 10 years' seniority as warrant officer, and then, after a further 10 years' service in the chiefs' rank, to be promoted to a higher rank, to be created and styled "Fleet" rank, carrying with it the honorary rank of lieutenant. Nor were they asking without reason or precedent, for in the Army there were several roads to the commission rank open. A non-commissioned officer in the Army may obtain a second lieutenancy in either a Foot or Cavalry regiment, and rise through every rank to that of general. Undoubtedly there was a good deal of jobbery in this line of promotion, as it was to this back door that the sons of well-to-do people went who, from lack of ability or application, had failed to enter the Army as commissioned officers through the Military Colleges or Militia. Then there was what, until recently, was called the Coast Brigade Royal Artillery, and also the Coast Battalion Royal Engineers, which were officered up to the rank of major exclusively by men who had risen by sheer merit from the ranks. And, lastly, there were the commissioned ranks of riding master and quarter-

master, which were usually given to Army warrant officers or Staff sergeants at an average of 35 years, carrying with them the honorary rank of lieutenant—equal to that of naval sub-lieutenant, with pay commencing at 9s. to 10s. 6d. per day, according to regiment, and rising by quinquennial increments of 1s. 6d. per day until the maximum of 15s. to 16s. 6d. per day was reached. After serving 10 years with honorary lieutenant's rank, quartermasters and ridingmasters receive a further step of promotion, carrying with it the honorary rank of captain—equal to lieutenant in the Navy—and they finally retired with the honorary rank of major on a maximum pension of £200 per annum, which they nearly all were able to obtain at the age of 50. Quartermasters and ridingmasters formed the bulk of officers in the Army who obtained their commissions from the ranks by their own merit and ability, and it was to positions relative in rank and pay to these that the senior warrant officers of the Navy were now aspiring. Army men could reach these grades at the age of 35, after 19 years' service, whereas naval men could only reach a corresponding rank at 50, after 34 years' service; and whereas the Army man had further steps of promotion, securing increased pay and pension open to him, the naval man was at the summit of his possibilities. His duties, however, were more responsible, and warrant officers had been striving for the past 20 years to get redress, and the matter had been frequently before Parliament. He would just quote from the report of a speech on the subject by the late head of the Admiralty (Lord G. Hamilton) made about this time last year—

"There are what are called chief warrant officers, but the description is a misnomer, because those who occupy the position of chief warrant officers are commissioned officers. . . . I think," added the noble Lord, "we might fairly consider whether we could not adopt some name to denote their position, and also whether we might not increase their number, and thus cause additional promotion. In addition to that, we ought to do our best in connection with the Ordnance Store Department and other Departments to comply with the warrant officers' request. There are a certain number of appointments held by commissioned officers at present which might fairly and legitimately be given to warrant officers of a certain standing. If, however, we cannot go so far as my hon. and gallant Friend would

*Mr. Kearley*

wish, he will see that we are prepared to look into this question in a kindly spirit, and to do our best to meet the wishes of this most respectable class of officers."

This was not a question merely affecting the few who would be immediately benefited, but it would act indirectly on every rating in the Navy. An advance given would increase the attractions to men to join, and it would enable the Government to retain men longer in the Service. It would cause contentment, and last, not least, it would sweep away the great hardship which had been patiently borne by a deserving class for years. With regard to the chief petty officers whilst holding superior rating and receiving increased pay contrary to what was the practice in all other ratings they had held, they received on retirement no increment beneficial to their pension, but were pensioned on the scale that applied to the rank next beneath them. Their duties as chief petty officers were far more responsible than those of the rank next beneath them, and many men would not accept the rating because of this inducement being withheld. These men asked for a halfpenny per day increased pension for each year they held the rating of chief petty officer. The justice of their claim was admitted by many of the highest officers in the Service. He ventured to bring these subjects forward because, dry as they might appear, they seriously affected the efficiency of the Navy, and everyone sympathised with the Navy, and was anxious that the men should be thoroughly contented.

COMMANDER BETHELL (York, E.R., Holderness) wished to support the observations of the hon. Gentleman who had just spoken as to the claims of the warrant officers, who were a highly meritorious class. Those who had any familiarity with the question knew that the position of the warrant officers had been greatly improved during the past 15 or 20 years, although he by no means wished to say they ought not to have all the benefits of promotion. The claims of these men were considered last year or the year before, although the Government of the day had not been able to give them all they wanted; and their case was still under consideration. Another question

the hon. Member had referred to seemed to have in it an element of injustice—namely, the question of the chief petty officers, which had been raised two or three times in the House. The hon. Member had fairly stated the case. The chief petty officers, who had always been an important element in the personnel of the Navy, were an increasingly important element, and though they received slightly higher pay, they did not get higher retiring pensions than the ordinary petty officers. That was extremely unjust. Great demands were made on the services of this class of officers as compared with ordinary petty officers in the Navy, and he should be glad to see their very modest demand, which would not cost over £20,000 a year, acceded to. A great deal of criticism had been offered to the policy of the noble Lord (Lord G. Hamilton) in the last Parliament, but while the Naval Defence Act was going through the House of Commons on the Second Reading nobody said a word against it. There was not a division against it, if he remembered rightly. Later on it was a great deal criticised, but it seemed to him that the course of events during the past five years had amply justified the policy of the Conservative Party with regard to the Naval Defence Act. The right hon. Gentleman the present First Commissioner of Works (Mr. Shaw Lefevre) had held that the Act would not place us in a better position relatively to other Powers, but would have the effect of making other Powers increase their Navies, to keep pace with us. Well, that opinion had not been verified, for no foreign country, certainly neither France nor Germany, had increased their fleets in a like proportion to ours. The policy of the late Government had been completely vindicated. Although they had increased the strength of the Navy so much in the past—a thing they were all glad to see—the present administration were also doing something in the direction of building new ships. He did not think, however, it would be convenient for them to discuss the ship-building policy of the Government on the general question of the condition of the Navy. It would be better to resume what they had to say to the ship-building Vote. With regard to the correspondence which had appeared in *The Times* and other papers during

the autumn, he did not think it was fair to say that naval officers should not be allowed to communicate with one another in order to get an opportunity of collectively ventilating their grievances, though it was no doubt right that they should not write to the Press. In one case they had sent round a circular letter expressing some grievances, which afterwards found its way into the Press. He did not see any objection to the course then pursued. Although not in entire sympathy with the complaints made, he certainly thought a little more generosity might be displayed towards naval officers in the matter of leave. It was hard when officers, who had been for three or four years on foreign service, returned home they should only get six or seven weeks', or, at the outside, two months' leave. Captains and Commanders got no leave at all. He did not know that these officers made complaint on this score, but it was a fact that when they returned home they were promptly put on half pay. Officers generally got a week for each year of absence up to two months' leave. The meagre leave granted was felt most by the younger officers who had homes to go to. After being away for a long time very naturally they desired to spend some time with their friends. As they got on in years they were anxious to progress in the service and secure the emoluments that accrued, and leave was not so much an object with them. Another grievance was in regard to service in harbour ships. They were kept three years in those ships, and that counted for pension and promotion; but if they remained longer, although they might have little or nothing to do, it did not count in pension or promotion. That he considered very hard, and as it had never, to his knowledge, been brought before the Admiralty before, he hoped it would receive careful consideration. Then there was a question which had excited a great deal of interest—namely, the question of the two Courts Martial in regard to the stranding of the *Howe*. He would not inquire whether the verdicts were just or unjust; it would be presumption on his part to do so, but the fact was there was an acquittal in each case, and the Admiralty had thought fit to practically override the verdicts and censure the officers who

were acquitted. There was no technicality in the case, and, he asked, was it fair that a man should be tried by his peers and acquitted, and then administratively censured by the Admiralty? He believed, though he was not quite certain about it, that there was no precedent for a Minute of this nature being published. He believed it had been the custom sometimes for a Minute to be issued and circulated to those officers who were immediately affected, but not as a punishment. Clearly, however, in the case in question the Minute was meant as a punishment. He could not say that the Admiralty had gone beyond their legal powers—he did not believe they had. No doubt they had a right to review sentences, but it was an extra legal right to reverse the decisions of Courts Martial as they had done in this case. The right hon. Gentleman opposite shook his head, but everyone who had read the Minute would know the effect it must have upon the reputation and career of the officers. What was the good of a Court Martial if its sentences were to be overridden? Surely the duty of the Admiralty was similar to the duty discharged by the Home Secretary in civil criminal cases—that of exercising the clemency of the Crown in lessening sentences if necessary. It was surely not the duty of the Admiralty to administer censure after officers had been acquitted. Without speaking for anyone who was connected with the unfortunate *Howe* disaster, he wished to say that there was another point on which the Admiralty had acted, he would not say illegally, but certainly in opposition to custom and extra legally. In the second Court Martial they had thought proper to take an officer from half-pay for the express purpose of sitting on the Court. The custom was quite clear. The Naval Discipline Act was not absolutely clear, but the unbroken custom of the Service was that a Court should consist of officers who were on active service. The officer appointed to be President summoned his juniors on the Court up to a certain number. It was manifest that if the Admiralty took on themselves to appoint a President from half-pay they might take every officer from half-pay and, to a certain extent, pack the Court. He did not pretend to say that the Admiralty had done any-

*Commander Bethell*

thing which amounted to packing the Court, but he thought he was justified in pointing out how far a practice such as the Admiralty had adopted might conceivably go. In appointing a President on half-pay he was sure they had acted contrary to custom and extra legally. They would, he thought, have been wise to have followed the practice usually adopted in assembling these Courts. There had been no necessity for the Admiralty to act in the way they had done. There were four or five Admirals—one of them senior to the prisoner—sitting on the Court, and it would have been well to have adopted the usual practice, and so to have prevented criticisms of this nature. And now he wished to touch upon a subject which was not at all technical, but rather sentimental. It might be said that there was little in a name, but he maintained that there was a great deal in the name of a ship. The Admiralty for a great many years had adopted abominably bad names for ships. Sentiment seemed to be entirely banished from the counsels of the Admiralty.

An hon. MEMBER: They are all old names.

\*COMMANDER BETHELL: They were not by any means old. He was only attributing to old Admiralty Boards what he was now attributing to the present Admiralty. What he complained of was that the Admiralty did not do anything to evoke sentiment and patriotism in the breasts of sailors by calling our ships by the names of great events or of great people. If they looked at other Navies, they generally found that the names of great Kings and great revolutionaries usually found a place amongst the ships. Italy, France, and Russia always went back a long distance for names for their vessels in order to excite feelings of patriotism amongst the sailors. Even our School Boards were deaf to the pleadings of sentiment, and never did anything to excite patriotism in the breasts of the young they had to educate. Her Most Gracious Majesty had given her great name to one or two ships, but her illustrious predecessor, more closely connected, perhaps, than any other Sovereign with the Navy—Queen Elizabeth—had never, so far as he knew,

given her name to a ship of the Royal Navy. He certainly thought that the name of that Sovereign ought to be borne by one of our ships. She starved the Navy, it was true : but, nevertheless, she was extremely solicitous for the good of the Navy. Then, again, some of the great deeds of this country might find a place in the names of our ships. The Battle of Sluys, which was a great victory, had never found such a place. One of the greatest Kings who ever sat on the Throne of this country, who also was connected with naval affairs — King Harold — might well lend his name to a ship ; poor Rosamond might lend hers ; and the Battle of Senlæ—at once our greatest victory and defeat—might also give its name to a vessel. Instead of names of this kind we had the *Magnificent*, and names of that class, the English dictionary being ransacked for them. He would ask the right hon. Gentleman who represented the Admiralty whether he would not be disposed to appoint a Committee to look into this matter. He knew it was hard to move the obdurate hearts of Admiralty officials ; he knew that that heart was narrow and cribbed by the necessities of office ; but surely it was as easy to find names for ships which carried some associations with them as it was to give the rubbishing names which were scattered through the Navy List. The name of the founder of the Royal House was borne by a horse—a stallion. Why not give that name to a ship ? He hoped the Admiralty would expand their minds on this subject, so as to include within them a little sentiment. He would ask hon. Members who proposed to follow him to put a little pressure on the Admiralty in regard to this question. The reform he was anxious to see brought about would not be a great one. A Committee might be appointed to consider it—a small Committee, a departmental Committee. If the Prime Minister were present, he would be able confidently to appeal to him for a small Committee. At any rate, remembering that the House was not often troubled with naval questions, and that sentiment very rarely interposed in Debates which were, as a rule, devoted to the shape of a ship or the position of a gun, he hoped the Admiralty would give favourable

consideration to the suggestion he threw out.

MR. E. J. C. MORTON (Devonport) said, he wished to draw the attention of the House from matters of sentiment to two practical points. He wished to impress upon the Government the fact that the claim of the warrant officers was essentially a moderate one, as it at present amounted to no more than that they should be given the same privileges with regard to the receiving of commissions as were accorded to warrant officers in the Army. If there was any difference between the authority and responsibility of the warrant officer of the Army and the warrant officer of the Navy, that of the latter was unquestionably the greater of the two. He would ask the Civil Lord of the Admiralty to give them some hope that this question would be dealt with. His second point was the case of the engine-room artificers in the Royal Navy, who were at present not admitted even to warrant rank, though they—unlike the men generally entering the Navy—were skilled artisans, and therefore brought something to the Service which they had acquired without cost to the State.

\*MR. MILDMAY (Devon, Totnes) wished to refer to a matter of considerable importance to the fishing population in the neighbourhood of Plymouth. The House would remember a disaster which occurred just outside Plymouth Sound more than a year ago, whereby a fisherman lost his life through the sinking of his boat by a shot from one of Her Majesty's gunboats. That disaster resulted in the appointment of the Commission on Target Practice Seawards. He should be out of Order in referring to the long delay which had occurred in the presentation of the Report of that Committee, because the matter was one which came under the purview of the right hon. Gentleman the President of the Board of Trade, but what he wanted to ask was, what instructions had been given to Her Majesty's gunboats pending the issuing of the Report of the Commission ? Were they at liberty to pursue their old tactics of firing over the old

fishing grounds, or had special instructions been given to them pending the issue of the Report? It would seem that no instructions had been given, in view of a case which was brought before the Devon Sea Fishery Board in October last. The case was as follows:—The crab-boat *Beatrice* was sailing two miles out from Plymouth Sound, and the men in the boat were about to lower the sail in order to haul in their crab-pots, when the gunboat *Bulldog* came up, and, at a distance of half a mile from the *Beatrice*, commenced to fire over in the direction of the boat. The men on the crab-boat requested the officer in charge of the gunboat to go farther out, and subsequently that officer ordered the firing to cease and took his vessel away. When the matter was brought under the notice of the Admiralty the officer in charge of the gunboat justified his conduct by saying that he was on the fishing ground before the fishermen went there. The fishermen did not admit the accuracy of the officer's statement, but he (Mr. Mildmay) did not wish to argue that point. What he wanted to ask the Admiralty was whether they endorsed the view of the officer in question that because he was first on the fishing ground therefore he had a right to exclude the fishermen from hauling their crab-pots by firing over the fishing grounds? It must be remembered that these crab-pots could only be hauled during a certain time of the day in the slack tide. At other times the tide ran very strong and the corks were under water. He hoped the House would agree with him that it was a monstrous proposition that Her Majesty's gunboats should be allowed to go out from Plymouth and should be justified in preventing these fishermen earning their daily bread by firing over their fishing grounds. He hoped that an assurance would be given that the Government did not endorse the view of the officer, and the right hon. Gentleman would be able to state what instructions had been given to the gunboats with regard to firing pending the issue of the Report of the Commission on Target Practice Seawards, and the action that might be taken on that Report.

Mr. PENN (Lewisham) desired to draw the attention of the House to a reduction which took place last year in the

*Mr. Mildmay*

engine-room complement of ships of war. He might have to go into some technical details, and he trusted the House would forgive him if he did so, seeing that the matter was one of considerable importance. The reduction to which he alluded was made on the advice of a Committee of Engineer Officers; but it was with that very advice that he ventured entirely to disagree. If the opinions of officers in charge of ships in the Navy at this moment were taken they would, he was sure, show that the reduction was viewed by them with considerable distrust. The numerical reduction was not a very great one; but in place of trained engine-room mechanics and engine-room artificers were substituted chief stokers. Chief stokers were excellent men, but they could not possibly carry out all the duties of skilled artificers. There was a wide-spread belief that engine-men were perpetually engaged in driving engines, but that was a mistake. A large part of their work consisted in repairing machinery and keeping it in order, not driving engines. The efficiency of a ship largely depended upon the due performance of these duties, that was to say on the efficiency of the machinery below. If the machinery below was not kept in proper order the men on deck could not possibly do their duty in time of emergency. The *Royal Sovereign*, which was one of the largest of our battle-ships, carried 19 skilled men, who had to perform the duty of superintending the whole of the machinery on board, the engine-room artificers having been reduced from 18 to 12. If 19 men could look after all the machinery on board the *Royal Sovereign* how was it that it took 20 skilled men to manage an Atlantic liner like the *Teutonic*? Such, however, was the case. In the case of the *Teutonic*, if any small defect became apparent in the machinery on the run from New York to Liverpool the moment the ship reached port there was a gang of men ready to go on board and put things right again. Nothing of the sort obtained in the case of a man-of-war. In time of war a battle-ship would necessarily be frequently cut off from the Dockyard, and, unless def be made good on board, the be altogether and absolutely u was a point which he thought have the largest possible st

it. We spent enormous sums upon our men-of-war, and he thought we ought to spend a little more in keeping them in working order. To his mind it was a foolish policy to have an enormous mass of machinery on board a ship without having a sufficient number of men to attend to it. There was another point to be considered in this connection. A ship that was largely independent of the Dockyard would save money absolutely in this sense, that she would not have to run to a Dockyard to make good defects, whilst the wages that would otherwise be spent in the Dockyard would be spent on board, where a stitch in time, so to speak, would save nine. It must be remembered that the engine-room artificer had cost the country nothing for his education, having joined the Service a trained mechanic. The stoker, however, could not possibly have the knowledge that was requisite to enable men to make good defects. He admitted at once that one might frequently come across the most estimable men as chief stokers, and men who were equal to engine-room artificers in many respects, but the engine-room artificer had this advantage, that in the event of anything going wrong he could do what was necessary to remedy the defects, whilst the stoker could not possibly do so by reason of his want of training. We did not yet know how fast it was safe to drive our ships. The only light that had been thrown on the matter had been cast upon it by the Naval Manœuvres. As far as he could make out, there had been very little quick running in the Naval Manœuvres, and the defects which had made themselves manifest in the machinery had been, after all, very few, compared with those that would have made themselves apparent had the ships been driven at the top of their speed, as they would necessarily be in time of war. He thought it was a mistake for us to get into a fool's paradise in this matter. If we did not open our eyes to this grave danger we should, when the time came, find that the ships we had relied upon as being able to accomplish a certain speed were quite incapable of developing that speed. No doubt, in time of action, the chief engineer would do his best, and there would be plenty of emulation. He sincerely hoped that vessels would be always running after the enemy's ships,

but he could conceive a case in which it was the proper thing to run away. Under these circumstances, the engine-room staff should know the capability of their ships. He should like to see a bolder experiment tried by having instructions given at the forthcoming Naval Manœuvres that full practicable speed was to be largely used throughout the fleet. If this course were adopted, he believed that a good many fallacies would be exploded, that a good many ships that were looked upon as greyhounds would turn out to be tortoises, whilst a good many of the slower ships that now had a good reputation would prove to be practically valueless. It was idle to keep all this knowledge back from the country. It might be a Machiavellian policy to prevent other nations from knowing the speed of our ships; but it would be better that we should know ourselves. He strongly urged that in future Naval Manœuvres there should be trials at the full natural draught-speed of our warships. The vessels ought to be driven at a much higher speed. He had made these criticisms because officers of the Navy were prevented, and properly prevented, from expressing their views on the subject. But he did propose to read extracts from a letter written by Chief Inspector Williams, who had served his country as an engineer officer in every part of the globe, and who had finished 40 years' service as Chief Engineer Inspector of Her Majesty's Fleet. This officer spoke with the greatest fear of the possible effects of the alterations. He expressed the opinion that the reduction in the number and the lowering of the quality of the engine-room staff was a most serious step to take, and was calculated to impair the efficiency of the fleet. The efficiency of a fleet in these days depended absolutely upon the engine-room officers, and if anything were done to weaken their strength the fleet must suffer. He hoped the Board would see their way to make further inquiries to ascertain whether there were not in the pigeon-holes at Whitehall Reports of such value as to override the opinions of the engineers on whose Report the reductions were made, and, in the event of such Reports being discovered, that they would revoke the decision at which they had arrived, and not delay one moment longer



than was necessary in re-instating the engine-room staff in their former position. He trusted that the remarks he had made would induce the Admiralty authorities to deal at once with this burning question.

**SIR U. KAY-SHUTTLEWORTH :** We have already passed the hour of midnight ; I shall therefore only very briefly assure the hon. Member who has just spoken that the subject to which he refers has lately been under the consideration of an exceedingly competent and influential Committee. A Committee was appointed by the late Board of Admiralty, consisting of three Naval Lords and two experienced Secretaries, who have inquired into the whole question of the manning of the Fleet ; and in making my statement in Committee I propose to tell the House some of the recommendations of that Committee on the question raised by the hon. Gentleman. Every precaution has been taken for meeting the case which he has brought before the House. I cannot now explain what has been done, indeed it would be more proper to do so when we reach the Vote in Committee of Supply. I quite recognise the especial right of the hon. Gentleman to call attention to questions connected with the engines of ships. It is a most important point, and it is one that has not escaped the careful attention both of the late and the present Board of Admiralty. I will not follow the hon. Gentleman in the remarks he made as to the speed of ships ; but I will tell him that the recent trials of all the ships built under the Naval Defence Act have passed off satisfactorily, as have also the trials of certain boilers that have been ferruled. The hon. Member for the Totnes Division of Devonshire has drawn attention to the deplorable accident resulting from the firing of guns over fishing grounds. I can only tell him that the whole subject of target practice seawards has been under the consideration of a Committee appointed by the Board of Trade, and the Report of that Committee has not yet reached the Admiralty. Meanwhile every precaution has been taken at the various ports to avoid the recurrence of mishaps. As to the particular case brought before the House by the hon. Member for Totnes I had

not heard of it before, but I certainly will inquire carefully into it if my hon. Friend will furnish me with the particulars. In regard to the questions brought forward by my hon. Friends the Members for Devonport, I can only say that the case of the warrant officers has been engaging the most attentive consideration of the Admiralty for some months past. I cannot now announce any decision upon it, but if a little more time is given us we shall be able to arrive at a conclusion. As it is past 12 o'clock, I do not think I can follow my hon. and gallant Friend opposite into the point he has raised as to the naming of ships. It is no doubt a very interesting subject, but I think the matter may very well be left in the hands of the officials at the Admiralty.

**COMMANDER BETHELL :** They have done it so badly for centuries that I was bound to draw attention to it.

**SIR U. KAY-SHUTTLEWORTH :** I cannot be held responsible for centuries. If the hon. and gallant Gentleman will give us a little more time perhaps we shall be able to satisfy him. Still, I will report to the First Lord what my hon. and gallant Friend has said upon the subject. The other subject my hon. and gallant Friend referred to was that of the *Howe* Courts Martial. I will not attempt at this moment to enter into that matter, but I will make an appeal to the House. An hon. Member has moved for the Minutes of these two Courts Martial. Those Minutes are of a bulky character, and pressure has been put upon the printers by the Admiralty, but they are not ready yet, and will not be ready for a week or 10 days. For myself I decline to enter into the matter until it is fully before the House, when the House will have an opportunity of judging how it came about that the Admiralty thought it their duty to interfere.

**COMMANDER BETHELL :** I especially said I would not go into the evidence.

**SIR U. KAY-SHUTTLEWORTH :** The hon. and gallant Gentleman passed some strictures upon the Admiralty for inserting certain things in a Minute. He has had no opportunity of reading the Minutes of the proceedings of the Court Martial, or the letter to the Admiralty upon those proceedings from Admiralty

Fairfax (which has never yet been published), nor has he read the evidence given before the second Court Martial. Therefore I appeal to the House not now to pursue this matter further. I hope that now the House will consent to go into Committee. There is no intention on the part of the Government to ask the House to proceed further than that. If the Speaker is allowed to leave the Chair and we get into Committee of Supply, then at 2 o'clock this day I hope I may be allowed to bring forward the Estimates.

MR. CONYBEARE (Cornwall, Cambridge) said, he had no wish to delay the House getting into Committee, but he desired in as few words as possible to ask the right hon. Gentleman to take into his careful consideration the question of the accommodation provided for the engine department men on board Her Majesty's ships. He did not know whether the right hon. Gentleman had personally examined the messing and sleeping accommodation set apart for the engine-room artificers, but he himself had, and he could only say it was devoid of decency and ordinary comfort. He hoped the right hon. Gentleman would do his best not only to improve matters on existing ships, but to provide better accommodation on new vessels, for under the existing condition of things respectable men could hardly be expected to do their duty and conform to the rules of the Service.

Question put, and agreed to.

SUPPLY—considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

NAVY ESTIMATES, 1893-94.

Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That 76,700 men and boys be employed for the Sea and Coastguard Services for the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1894, including 15,005 Royal Marines."

Motion made, and Question, "That the Chairman do report Progress, and ask leave to sit again," put, and agreed to.

Committee report Progress; to sit again To-morrow, at Two of the clock.

SUPPLY—REPORT.

Resolutions [March 3rd] reported.

VOL. IX. [FOURTH SERIES.]

# CIVIL SERVICES AND REVENUE DEPARTMENTS, 1892-3 (SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES).

## CLASS I.

1. "That a Supplementary Sum, not exceeding £20,000, be granted to Her Majesty, to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March 1893, for the Expenses of Inland Revenue Buildings and of Post Office and Post Office Telegraph Buildings in Great Britain."

2. "That a Supplementary Sum, not exceeding £12,000, be granted to Her Majesty, to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March 1893, for the National Portrait Gallery."

3. "That a Supplementary Sum, not exceeding £2,200, be granted to Her Majesty, to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March 1893, for the Expenses of Maintaining certain Harbours, Lighthouses, &c., under the Board of Trade."

Resolutions 1 to 3 agreed to.

4. Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That a Supplementary Sum, not exceeding £34,786, be granted to Her Majesty, to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March 1893, for payments under the Light Railways Act of 1889."

THE MARQUESS OF CARMARTHEN (Lambeth, Brixton): I wish to ask from the Secretary to the Treasury some assurance that as much labour as possible will be employed on these works at the present time, instead of putting them off till a season when the men might be more profitably engaged in agricultural pursuits. Will the Treasury exercise pressure with that object in view?

THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Sir J. T. HIBBERT, Oldham): I intended, and indeed thought I had already given, that assurance during the discussion on the Vote. The Treasury will use its influence with the Irish Board to get these railways finished as soon as possible.

THE MARQUESS OF CARMARTHEN: It is not the completion of the railways I am asking about. I want to have an assurance that labour will be employed at the present time.

SIR J. T. HIBBERT: The railways cannot be finished unless labour is employed.

Resolution agreed to.

**SUFFOLK COUNTY COUNCIL COMMITTEE BORROWING POWERS BILL.**

(No. 49.) SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."—(*Mr. Everett.*)

Objection having been taken,

\*SIR CHARLES DALRYMPLE (Ipswich): I hope the objection will not be persisted in. The Bill has passed the Committee on Standing Orders. It is of the greatest importance to the County of Suffolk that the Bill should proceed, and both the County Councils of the county are agreed about it. The Bill is to go to a Committee, so that it will be thoroughly examined.

\*THE PRESIDENT OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. H. H. FOWLER, Wolverhampton, E.): The Bill is one correcting a technical error in the Bill of 1888. The Local Government Board are strongly in favour of it, as the Suffolk County Council is actually prevented borrowing money for the purpose of erecting an asylum in one part of the county. A Select Committee will carefully examine the Bill.

VISCOUNT CRANBORNE (Rochester): This particular question was much considered at the time of the passing of the County Councils Act, and borrowing powers were strictly limited under that Act. Of course, I accept the assurance of the right hon. Gentleman that the Select Committee will carefully consider this point.

\*MR. H. H. FOWLER: This Bill has nothing to do with the powers of the County Council. It supplies an omission which was made when at a late stage of the County Council Bill in another place. The County of Suffolk was divided into two parts for administrative purposes. This Bill will not in any way increase the powers of the County Council.

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a second time, and committed to a Select Committee of Five Members, Three to be nominated by the House and Two by the Committee of Selection.

Ordered, That all Petitions against the Bill presented three clear days before the meeting of the Committee be referred to the Committee; that the Petitioners praying to be heard by themselves, their Counsel, or Agents, be heard against the Bill, and Counsel heard in support of the Bill.

Ordered, That the Committee have power to send for persons, papers, and records.

Ordered, That Three be the quorum.—(*Mr. Everett.*)

**REFORMATORY SCHOOLS (SCOTLAND) BILL.—(No. 202.)**

Bill read a second time, and committed for To-morrow, at Two of the clock.

**STATUTORY RULES PROCEDURE BILL (No. 162.)**

Bill read a second time, and committed for Monday next.

**MUNICIPAL CORPORATIONS ACT (1882) AMENDMENT BILL.—(No. 159.)**

Bill considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Clause 1.

Committee report Progress; to sit again To-morrow.

**PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO CHILDREN BILL.—(No. 134.)**

Bill read a second time, and committed for Thursday.

**MERCHANT SHIPPING (FISHING BOATS) ACTS (1883 and 1887) AMENDMENT BILL.—(No. 183.)**

Bill read a second time, and committed for Thursday.

**ORDNANCE FACTORIES (RETIREMENTS AT SIXTY-FIVE YEARS OF AGE).**

Return ordered, "of all the Men employed in the Royal Ordnance Factories who have been dismissed under the Regulation dated the 16th day of June 1892, compelling retirement at the age of Sixty-five, showing the Ages of Persons so retired, and the amount of Compensation, if any, awarded in each case."—(*Mr. Chamberlain.*)

**PUBLIC ACCOUNTANTS BILL.**

On Motion of Sir Albert Rollit, Bill to amend the Law relating to Public Accountants, ordered to be brought in by Sir Albert Rollit, Sir John Lubbock, Mr. H. L. W. Lawson, Mr. Sexton, Sir Frederick Dixon-Hartland, Mr. Barton, Mr. Broad, and Mr. Clancy.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 248.]

House adjourned at twenty minutes before One o'clock.

## HOUSE OF LORDS,

*Tuesday, 7th March 1893.*

## REPRESENTATIVE PEER FOR IRELAND.

Writs and Returns electing the Lord Dunsany a Representative Peer for Ireland in the room of the Lord Dunsandle and Clanconal deceased, with the Certificate of the Clerk of the Crown in Ireland annexed thereto: *Delivered* (on oath), and Certificate read.

Several Lords—Took the Oath.

LAW OF INHERITANCE AMENDMENT  
BILL.—(No. 17.)

## SECOND READING.

Order of the Day for the Second Reading, read.

THE LORD CHANCELLOR (Lord HERSCHELL): My Lords, the Bill to which I have to ask your Lordships to give a Second Reading does not contain any novel proposal, and I think it can scarcely be regarded in any way as of a Party character. The proposal which it embodies was presented to the House by the late Government in the Bill relating to land transfer. It was no doubt in that case accompanied by other provisions to which I will allude in a moment, but they were not such as to prevent those who supported the previous Bill from supporting the present measure, or diminish its claim to a Second Reading now. I had intended to follow the provisions of the fourth part of that Bill in preparing the present Bill, and I was under the impression it had been followed in terms, but the draftsman has sought to make the Bill somewhat shorter by compressing two of the provisions of that Bill in two clauses into a single clause. I do not think by doing so he has made the Bill altogether clearer than it was before, but of course that is a matter of drafting, and, as far as I can, I intend the provisions of this Bill to correspond in their effect precisely with the provisions of the Land Transfer Bill introduced by the late Government in Part IV. The main object of this Bill is to alter the law of inheritance, and

to assimilate the distribution of real property in case of intestacy to the distribution of personal property. It does not propose to interfere with the making of a will, or with the effect of a will when made. The same testamentary power which exists at present would exist if this Bill were passed, and any owner of real estate may dispose of it as he pleases, just as he may under the existing law. The only other alteration proposed, besides that dealing with the law of inheritance, is subsidiary. To some extent it is necessary, for the purpose I have described, that real estate should vest in the personal representative in the same way as personal estate, as was proposed by the measure of the late Government. It is essential, I think, to any improvement in the system of land transfer, that that devolution upon the personal representative should take place, but that is not essential to the other provisions of the Bill. It was considered just and right then, and I am at a loss to understand why it is less just and right now than when the proposal was made by the late Government. In case of intestacy, the law ought to provide for the just distribution of the intestate's real property. Supposing an intestate owner of real property not to have made a will, what is the most just and fair distribution of that property, looking at the matter as a whole, and speaking generally, that the law can make? Supposing an intestate to leave nothing but real property. Can it be seriously contended that his oldest son should have all, and that the widow and younger children should have nothing? That is the disposition of real property which the law at present makes, and I ask your Lordships to come to the conclusion that that is not a just distribution of property, and that as the law ought in the case of intestacy to dispose of property in the manner which on the whole is most just, that the law ought to be altered accordingly. This is no new principle, because the provision in the present Bill is similar to that which has been passed into law at the instance of the late Government. The Land Purchase Act (Ireland), 1891, provided that with respect to all land sold under that Act the present law of inheritance should cease to operate, and that real estate should be distributed in case

of intestacy in the same way as personality. If that was thought a just disposition in such a case, it seems to me it would be difficult to show why in this country it is not, and that there are no cases here in which that would be the more just distribution. The very policy of the law appears to indicate the necessity for a change, because nothing can be more inconvenient than that there should be one law of inheritance regulating the succession in one way in a particular portion of the country, and a different law of inheritance prevailing in another portion of the country. It seems to me the fact that such a change has been partially made argues in favour of going still further. Again, in the Small Holdings Bill a proposal was made in the House of Commons that the law of inheritance should be changed in the manner proposed, and that the small holdings should be treated in case of intestacy as personal property, and should not descend as real estate entirely to the eldest son. Therefore, my Lords, you have had an affirmation of the principle which underlies this Bill by both Houses of Parliament in the Irish Land Purchase Act of 1891 and in the Small Holdings Act. I believe the country is desirous of seeing such a change as the Bill would effect, and the desire is not confined to one Political Party, but is felt by many who differ widely from my own political views. The present law of inheritance in England, of course, really rests on the feudal system, which at one time prevailed in this country with a completeness it does not possess at present. But in earlier times the law was not as unreasonable as it is now. The eldest son was not regarded as the absolute proprietor of the estate to which he succeeded without any duties or obligations to the other members of his family; but he was bound to take charge of and make provision for the rest of the family. It was only in later days that this inheritance of the eldest son came to be regarded as an absolute right, and that all idea of duty and responsibility in relation to it disappeared. We are, therefore, maintaining at the present day in an unreasonable manner a system which was not carried out unreasonably when it originally came into existence. But more than that: I would remind your Lord-

*Lord Herschell*

ships that until a comparatively recent period the widow had a right to her dower of one-third of the estate; but owing to the difficulties of title, the practice of conveyancers has brought about the extinction of that right to dower. Estates are now always so conveyed that the dower is barred, with the result that when a man dies intestate leaving real property the widow gets nothing, the younger children also get nothing, and the whole becomes vested absolutely in the eldest son. Ought there to be such a distinction, with regard to beneficial ownership, between real and personal property? The provisions of this Bill will not affect your Lordships. Hardly any Peer succeeds to his estates by intestacy; nor does the question really touch large estates, which as a rule descend under settlements and not under wills. But it is a matter which does concern many people in this country who are small holders of land, and the children of those people. In these cases the gravest injustice frequently arises, and I ask your Lordships not to maintain a system which works injustice merely because it is old. It is true that under particular circumstances the Legislature has intervened. If a man dies leaving realty and personality together under £500, the widow is given a title to the realty absolutely. But there is no provision in the case of a man with a very small amount of real property dying and leaving children; in such case the whole goes to the eldest son. The Legislature has been endeavouring of recent years to add to the number of small holders of real property. By means of Building Societies and other agencies, I believe this policy has in many parts of the country been to a large extent successful. But what has been the consequence? We have been creating, owing to the existing law of inheritance, an amount of injustice which did not exist when landed estates were not held in small holdings. It is true that by anyone who owns real property making a will such injustice may be prevented. That is equally true for large estates. If everybody makes a will or a settlement this Bill will have no operation at all, and, therefore, the very opposition which may be offered to it shows that there are many who will make neither wills or settlements. And if that is true generally it is especially true of those for

whom I invoke your Lordships' consideration—the smaller holders of land. In cases of illegitimacy where a man dies without heirs his estates are escheated to the Crown; but illegitimate owners of real estate are not numerous among the total body of intestates, and certainly they are not less but more likely than legitimate owners to make a will. The change proposed in the Bill, as I have said, does not infringe any right. It does not in the slightest degree prevent anybody from disposing of his property exactly as he pleases. All that it provides is that when a man dies intestate the law shall make a fairer distribution of his real estate than at present. That is the substantial object of the Bill. The other matter is of inferior importance in connection with the subject of land transfer, making it more simple by providing for devolution upon the personal representative. Objection has on a former occasion been taken that this matter was introduced to your Lordships only in connection with the system of land transfer but I have already pointed out that the change of beneficial ownership in land in cases of intestacy has nothing to do with land transfer, and therefore I have thought it better to bring this proposal before your Lordships as a separate Bill. On a previous occasion some objected to the land transfer part of the Bill, and some to the law of inheritance portion of it, and I have, therefore, not dealt with the two in one Bill. In submitting the present Bill, I ask your Lordships to consider not the effect it may have on your Lordships' House, or upon the class of large landowners, but the effect it may have, and is sure to have, in preventing the injustice that constantly takes place in cases of the many small owners of land scattered throughout the country.

Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2<sup>a</sup>."  
—(*The Lord Chancellor.*)

THE EARL OF DUDLEY, in moving that the Bill be read a second time this day six months, said, he did so with very great diffidence. He had no desire to enter on any argument on either present or future law with the noble and learned Lord on the Woolsack, to whom such Quixotic action might afford amusement, but would be in no sense entertaining to himself. But the change which it embodied in the law relating to in-

heritance and intestacy, which was understandable even to lay minds, was so considerable and far-reaching that he had taken upon himself the responsibility of opposing it. It was a change of the most vital importance, not only to the owners of large estates, but also to small owners of land. Their Lordships were asked to assimilate two things which were totally different. It proposed to sanction in all cases of intestacy the assimilation of real and personal property, the abolition of the custom relating to primogeniture, and the division of a person's whole landed property amongst his successors in identically the same way in which personal property was now divided. As had been pointed out on a former occasion, there was no difficulty at all in dividing money or any other personal property when it had taken the form of money; but the case of real property was entirely different. The division of land nearly always seriously impaired its value, even under the most favourable circumstances; but at the present time, with the agricultural interest at its lowest ebb, with the price of land falling heavily year by year, it was difficult to imagine the extent of the loss which would be incurred by a forced sale of real property. Surely, therefore, the present was not the time to pass any law which, in cases of intestacy, would compel the immediate realisation of landed estate and a forced sale of property at a period of ruinous depreciation. The duty which primarily devolved upon the State in cases of intestacy surely was that the property of the deceased person should be allotted in the way in which the State had reason to believe that property would have been allotted had a will been made. That was the principle embodied in the existing law in the case of personal property, and there was nothing in the majority of wills to make their Lordships believe that it was the wish or desire of owners of landed property in general that on their death, should they happen to die intestate, their estates should be broken up by forced sale and divided as personal property. Did not tenour of most wills lead to the belief that it was the wish of the testators that their eldest sons should carry on the work which they had begun, should become attached to the property as they

had been, and should take the same continued interest in local affairs which had hitherto been the great characteristic of English landowners? It was urged that if the preservation of a property intact was of so much importance to the proprietor a will would be made. That might, to a certain extent, be true, but accident and carelessness would always militate against such a contention, and landowners were, of course, as liable to unforeseen disaster and sudden death as any other class of the community. But apart from that, he would point out the serious effect of the Bill on the smaller owners of land, of whom there were, according to recent statistics, 55,000 in this country occupying their own holdings of less than 50 acres. Very often those persons did not make wills, as the Lord Chancellor had himself testified. Speaking in that House on the 25th June, 1889, the noble and learned Lord pointed out that a great number of small owners of land did not make wills. Under those circumstances, the result of the Bill would be that in the case of small properties there would be a greatly increased tendency towards the evils of extreme sub-division. What those evils were might be gathered by anyone who was conversant with the system of unlimited sub-division prevailing among the small proprietors of France. Lady Verney, in her admirable article on the peasant proprietors of that country, quoted a writer, who said—

"The small properties of the peasants are found everywhere, the minute division of the small farms among all the children makes them in general poor and miserable. I have more than once seen divisions to such an excess that a single fruit tree standing on about 10 perches of land constituted a farm."

It was impossible to deny that extreme sub-division was an evil of the greatest magnitude, and who was to say it might not occur in our own country if this Bill passed into law. Surely the noble and learned Lord did not imagine he would be able to change the whole habits of these small proprietors, and by a few strokes of the pen overcome the dislike of testamentary documents, and the small properties in this country would, therefore, from the want of testamentary documents, run an additional risk of division and deterioration. The Bill, in fact, subjected small properties throughout the

country to that risk. It was not surprising that this Bill should emanate from a Member of the Government now in Office, for they knew that the small proprietors were amongst the bulwarks of Conservatism. It would be remembered that when the Act which had been referred to by the noble and learned Lord was under consideration in Committee an Amendment was proposed that these holdings when purchased should rank as personal property, and that it was lost by a considerable majority. He believed that the policy which the late Government then pursued would be annulled to a large extent by this Bill, and he could not believe, when the majority of that House were only last year in favour of aiding the growth of the small proprietor, this Bill had any chance of success, and, therefore, he should trespass no longer on the indulgence of their Lordships except to say that the measure was founded upon a dangerous and mischievous principle, and would lead to deplorable results. It would materially alter the present system of succession, and might entail great hardships upon the holders of small landed estates, and he asked their Lordships not to allow this Bill to become embodied in English law. He begged to move that the Bill be read a second time that day six months.

Amendment moved, to leave out ("now") and add at the end of the Motion ("this day six months.")—(*The Earl of Dudley*.)

LORD THRING said, it was rather hard noble Lords on that side of the House should be accused of endeavouring to remove the bulwarks of Conservatism when the very words of this Bill followed those of the former measure introduced by the late Lord Chancellor. Objection was made to the Bill as inadvisable in the present depressed state of agriculture, but it was certainly easier in present circumstances to sell small properties than large estates, and the Bill must, therefore, have a favourable and not an unfavourable effect on agriculture. Another obvious fallacy was that if the law were changed in cases of intestacy what would have been the wishes of testators would be contravened. A just testator invariably made provision for his younger children, and did not heap up all his property in the hands of his eldest son; and if he did so, he always charged it for the

benefit of his widow and younger children. How, then, could it be said that this measure was unjust, or that it was more just in cases of intestacy to leave widows and children penniless than to give eldest sons a share only? In regard to registration and making property more easily transferable, it was most desirable to increase the number of small proprietors in the country. No doubt great subdivision of properties had occurred in France, but it had made the peasants thrifty, and had had a marked effect on the Government of that country. To increase the number of small owners was a desirable object for any Government, and it was necessary for its encouragement that upon devolution there should be an executor to represent the land. He thought the Lord Chancellor had rather minimised the advantages of registration without which there could not be easy transfer of land. For that purpose an executor to represent the deceased owner was necessary, who might be put on the register in his place. It was of the utmost importance that this Bill should pass both for the justice of the cause and for the technical reason of enabling small properties to be easily transferred and registered. That part of the question ought not to be overlooked in the interest of the poorer classes. Talk of sub-division of property! Surely the greatest possible sub-division was more desirable than that small proprietors throughout the length and breadth of the land should leave their wives and everybody except their eldest son without provision simply from a wish not to change the law because in some particular cases the disposition of the larger estates might be affected. In the interests of the working classes and for the easy transfer of property this Bill was a just and righteous one and he hoped it would obtain their Lordships' approbation.

LORD ARUNDELL OF WARDOUR said, that having opposed the Land Transfer Bill when brought forward by the late Government, he would venture to make a few observations upon this measure. He recognised the hardship of the case where all the land on intestacy went to the eldest son, but inconveniences must occur upon intestacy, under the custom of primogeniture, and even under this Bill. It might be said that every man ought to make a will, but even when

made wills were sometimes lost, abstracted, or invalidated from some technicality. No doubt among the poorer classes many were reluctant to make wills, partly on account of the expense and partly from a mistrust of the lawyers, but as matters stood, where more than land was left, which was the general rule, the distribution made under the law of intestacy fairly satisfied the wishes of the smaller holders. This proposal carried with it the irreparable drawback that the freehold would disappear because it would be in all probability sold to neighbouring proprietors. He was as desirous of seeing an extension of freeholds as anybody, not only in the Conservative interest but in the interest of the prospective holders themselves. About 1878 he sold 400 acres of land in small lots ranging from 28 down to 17 acres, but not one of the purchasers had in the result settled down as a resident small holder, and the properties had passed to neighbouring proprietors and others. What purchasers desired was not merely land of cultivation, but to hold it as the larger estates were held, with a reasonable chance of passing it to their posterity. The whole tendency of this Bill was towards the abolition of primogeniture. In France one unlooked-for consequence of extreme subdivision of property had been a great diminution in population, as the small proprietors there had discovered that it was inconvenient to distribute the patrimony among so many children. During last year a Bill had been brought in to revise the existing Code in that respect. The noble and learned Lord need not have made this bold proposal for general distribution, but might have presented to the House a measure upon some graduated scale, or some other alternative. Indirect inducements had been given to small proprietors throughout this country to leave their freeholds to one member of the family, and not to distribute them. Under the system of gavelkind in Kent landed property went in equal division, but that tenure was found so inconvenient that in point of fact all the land in Kent had now been disgavelled. This Bill was to apply to Ireland and not to Scotland, but there ought not to be one law for one part of Great Britain and a different law existing in another. Lord Dufferin and other authorities had pointed



out the evils arising from subdivision in Ireland. A Flemish peasant would never think of dividing the farm he cultivated among his children. Throughout Germany law and custom alike had always been opposed to the division of farms. In Upper Bavaria that had been carried out so far that almost all the land was now in the hands of wealthy owners. He opposed the Bill because it would do irreparable injury to families without any compensating benefit to the community.

THE EARL OF DUNRAVEN said he admitted he did not remember the Bill of the late Lord Chancellor, or how far it resembled or differed from this Bill; but he did not consider it at all material upon a question of this kind whether it was introduced by a Conservative, a Liberal, a Unionist or a Separatist Government, the subject-matter of it was what had to be considered. Not understanding clearly some of the clauses in the Bill he was rather relieved by the admission of the Lord Chancellor that condensation had not produced lucidity. He gathered that the Bill would not prevent a man's making any settlement or will which would be legal and valid now. That being so, it was obvious the Bill would not affect the devolution of property in the case of people who took the trouble to make wills or settlements. He doubted whether any considerable number of small holders of agricultural estates died intestate, but thought that the greater number of cases of intestacy occurred among the owners of house property. The present law was not likely to encourage the artisan classes to invest their savings in house property, a most desirable thing to encourage, because if by accident a man died intestate that property went to the eldest son, and the other children and wife were left entirely unprovided for. The same thing might occur in the case of small landed properties. He thought the measure before the House was not likely to deter people from investing their money in small properties, but that it would have the contrary effect. In the case of division owing to intestacy what would happen would be this. An arrangement would very probably be made between the eldest son and his brothers and sisters, by which he would buy up the property, and pay them an equitable share in money. For that purpose he might have to raise

money which might possibly embarrass him for a time; but he submitted that it would be better that the owner should be temporally embarrassed rather than that his brothers and sisters should be left absolutely penniless by mere accident. After all, a man had only to make a will to avoid all difficulty—if he was so very anxious that his property should be kept together. The natural desire of a just man was to make some suitable provision for his younger children, and the law, as amended by this Bill, would carry out the intentions of fair-minded men. Artizans and small tradesmen, investing their savings in house property or small agricultural estates, might, by foolish procrastination or pure accident, die without making a will. In such a case, great injustice would be done to the wives and younger children. He could not help thinking that the knowledge that such accidents might happen must deter the wives of these men, for their own sakes and for the sake of their families, from pressing their husbands to make investments of this character. The Bill would apparently operate in the direction of securing the fair division of property among those entitled. He would vote for the Second Reading of the Bill for precisely the same reason that induced his noble Friend (Lord Dudley) to move its rejection—namely, because the effect of it would be to encourage small investments in small freehold estates.

THE MARQUESS OF SALISBURY: My Lords, I observe that the noble and learned Lord on the Woolsack and the noble Lord who sits opposite derive a good many of their arguments in support of this Bill from the consideration of a certain other Bill introduced by my noble Friend Lord Halsbury when Lord Chancellor a few years ago. They seem to think that if they take a portion—however small a portion—out of a Bill that has been introduced by somebody else, that somebody else is bound to vote for the Bill in all its portions as much as if it had been in its original entirety. Now, of course, I am met at the outset by a legal contention on the part of the noble and learned Lord—which I am not competent to contest—but I was assured that these clauses were necessary to the machinery for giving registration and cheap transfer of land, and I thought that, though the

price might be high, the advantage to be gained was so much higher that I was willing to assent to the clauses. But the noble and learned Lord on the Woolsack denies the necessity, and he thereby places me in some embarrassment, because my legal conscience at the present moment is at San Remo.

**THE LORD CHANCELLOR :** The noble Marquess has misunderstood me. I said that the Bill provided for two things—one, the devolution of the property on the legal personal representative, and the other, the change in the beneficial ownership. I said the first was necessary to land registration, but not the second.

**THE MARQUESS OF SALISBURY :** I have a distinct recollection that the noble and learned Lord objected to the separation between legal and beneficial ownership, which I understood would be the result of the device favoured by my noble Friend. However, I am relieved from much of my embarrassment by the fact that my noble and learned Friend, with the true instinct of a lawyer, takes distinctly the opposite view, and, therefore, I may shelter myself under his great authority, and believe, as I do, with regard to the effect of this Bill; but that is not a matter of very great importance, though it explains my vote in this House three years ago, which I cannot imagine to be a matter of very great consideration on the question of my vote to-day. I do not quite understand what has fallen from the noble and learned Lord on the Woolsack with regard to investments. A man—though it is not a very prudent thing to do now—might purchase a bit of land containing some very fertile fields and some very hungry and sterile fields, and he would be very much surprised when the purchase had gone on a certain way if he was told, "You have admitted the purchase of these sterile fields, but you shall not have these fertile fields at all." That is very much what the noble and learned Lord wishes to force on me. If the noble and learned Lord will produce a good measure of land transfer I will consider favourably any change in the principle of the law which is necessary to bring the system of land transfer into effect. But it strikes me very much that in this very crude and ill-considered Bill, which is so drawn that the first words of

it as they stand would deprive any person now in possession of property of the right to execute any testamentary disposition—I cannot help thinking that the noble and learned Lord has not been actuated by a simple legal or juridical object in bringing forward this Bill. It is a well-known flag, it is a well-known article of the Radical programme, and I rather think the noble and learned Lord wished to qualify for a good certificate of Radicalism by bringing in a Bill which would satisfy his friends. He is dragging his coat, or whatever the more democratic garment may be suitable to the occasion, in order that we may have a division—which I hope we shall have—so that he may be in a position to show his friends the purity of his Radicalism and the utter detestability of us and our principles. With reference to the expediency of this Bill, I am much struck by the fact that we are dealing entirely with hypotheses. Nobody seems to know whether, as a matter of fact, there are or are not many cases of intestacy. If there are no cases of intestacy, then this proposal is nothing but what I have described it, as a flag lifted up by the noble and learned Lord. It is worthless. There is no use disturbing the law and disturbing the arrangements of many persons for the sake of a result which would be practically *nil*. But suppose there are a certain number of intestacies, are they intentional or unintentional intestacies? It is only the unintentional intestacies which can support the proposal of the noble and learned Lord. I can imagine that if the existing law is drawn in accordance with the wishes and traditions and belief of the people, if they know that the distribution which the law will make will be what they themselves desire, they will not take the trouble to make a will, but they will leave it to the law to make the distribution of which they approve. And I want to know what proof there is that they do not approve of the distribution which the law makes. What grievances have you to bring up? What cases have you in which you can show that the testator, had he made a will, would have made it in a manner so strikingly different from that which the law has prescribed? We have one evidence—an evidence which has already been referred to in this debate, an evidence which seems to me of a very cogent kind. This law which

you prefer is not new ; it was the law of one of the counties of England, the law of gavelkind which prevailed in Kent. Parliament gave to the inhabitants of Kent the power of withdrawing themselves from this law if they wished, and they have done so. So that gavelkind has almost disappeared. Can we have a more striking proof that the existing policy of the law is in accordance with the wishes of the English people ? Now I heard a good deal of a just will, but in reference to all wills—to wills as a whole—I demur to the applicability of the phrase. It would be impossible for the law to lay down in all cases what would be a just will. One will is not more just than another. A just will is that it should be the will of the person who made it, that it should be in accordance with the wishes of the person to whom the money belonged, and who has bequeathed it. I admit a testator might in certain extreme cases use his power unjustly. If, for instance, he was to starve the rest of his family for the benefit of one member of it that would be an extremely unjust case.

LORD THRING : It is the law.

THE MARQUESS OF SALISBURY : But are we to alter the law which in a number of cases works well in order to prevent it working ill in another extreme case. But you cannot prove that it has worked ill in any number of extreme cases. That is what the Government are going to do. Everyone knows that hard cases make good law, and you must regulate your law and deal with each case on its own merits, and not according to the requirements of some specially hard particular case. How many of those people are there ? Have you any statistics to show ? I doubt their existence in large numbers. My experience is that a man does not invest in real property unless he has a little other property besides, and then that happens which is the usual disposition of persons who make a will—namely, that the personal property is divided among the children while the real property remains undivided. The case of justice is not made out ; it does not arise. Necessarily from the circumstances of the case it can only be proved by statistics and facts. The statistics and the facts are not forthcoming, and there is nothing to justify you in changing the law. The tone of the noble and

learned Lord on the Woolsack was as though the Code Napoléon and the Statute of Distributions were inserted into the Decalogue, but that is not the case. There is no especial moral superiority in the Statute of Distributions. It is not right for a father to leave any of his children destitute if he can prevent it, but that requirement once fulfilled the question of justice does not arise. Now the matter has been argued to-night with reference to another question, its effect upon the small properties which we have lately been making special efforts to extend. It seems to me there is no doubt, if it is true that many men die unintentionally intestate, a Bill of this kind must be directly in the teeth of the policy of the Bill which your Lordships sanctioned last year. Directly a man dies, we will assume unintentionally, intestate, which is supposed to be so common, under this Bill his property must be sold. You cannot do as you do in France, you cannot cut it up into small strips, and leave one man with a ditch and another man with a fruit tree. You must sell it, and if you sell it, it is naturally bought by a person of large property who is near that land. And so as fast as you by means of the credit of the State create small holdings in the interests of the country and in the interests of the stability of society so fast by the operation of this Bill, if the state of intestacy is as you believe, will you find that those small holdings are lapped up again and fall into the body of large estates. It is absurd to blow hot and cold ; to undo with the left hand what you are doing with the right. I should say that in any case this Bill is a crude absurd production, a bit taken out of a much larger measure, of which it gives to us none of the benefits, but I think the principle, even if I was more reconciled to it than I am, and even if it seemed to be more in accordance with the wishes of the people than the evidence shows, I should say this moment is inopportune. Allow your Small Holdings Bill to be tried. Let us see how it works, and what the statistics of testacy to intestacy, and what are the facts arising out of its operation. Let us know what the feelings of the people are, and their habits with regard to intestacy and the disposition of their property. Then we shall have some light to guide us ; at present we

have no light to guide us ; we are proceeding on pure hypothesis, and we run the risk of undoing the policy upon which we embarked with so much pains last year.

THE LORD PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL AND SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA (The Earl of KIMBERLEY) : My Lords, the noble Marquess began by remarking that he thought the motive of the noble and learned Lord on the Woolsack in introducing this Bill was to display the purity of his Radicalism. The noble Marquess will excuse me if I say that it seems to me that the course he has taken to-day displays the purity of his Conservatism. As my noble and learned Friend has said, the Bill follows that which was brought in three years ago for Land Transfer which included those provisions which, in spite of the very strong support which the noble Marquess gave it, powerful as that support is always, and of such assistance as we could give, which was not much, were rejected by the majority of your Lordships on that occasion. Now, my Lords, I confess that I am unable to follow the arguments of the noble Marquess. I cannot, for instance, concur in what he said when he asserted that there could be no such thing as a just will. I must say that fills me with astonishment.

THE MARQUESS OF SALISBURY : That was not what I said. What I said was that the term "unjust" was inapplicable to wills in general, and was only applicable in extreme cases.

THE EARL OF KIMBERLEY : Then my notions of justice in such a matter are entirely opposed to those of the noble Marquess. The noble Marquess seems to think that, because a man has a right to make a will, any will he may make must necessarily be just ; but if a man exercises his right in an unjust way surely his will must be an unjust one. What is a just will ? The noble Marquess admitted that in the general opinion of mankind a will which provides fairly for a man's family is a just will, while it is an unjust will where a man gives the whole of his property to his eldest son and leaves his wife and the rest of the family without any means of support. I say that when a man does not make a will, and the State has to

step into his place, it is the duty of the State to make as fair and just a disposition of his property as it can make, as far as it can do so. The noble Marquess says we want statistics. Statistics of what testators would have done had they made wills ! Why, how can you have statistics of what testators would have done ? All that can be obtained are statistics of cases where no will was made and where in consequence the property devolved upon the eldest son. Those statistics you might obtain, but how much are you advanced by that ? The mere fact that at present the estate devolves, by the operation of the law, where there is no will to the eldest son implies the grievance which this Bill is intended to remedy, and this Bill merely says that the State ought to do as nearly as it can what it may presume the testator would have done if he had made a will. He might, no doubt, have done something else, but the State can only take what on the whole may seem to be the prudent and wise course to take. I do not think this is a very far-reaching Bill, and I cannot understand how anyone can possibly look with satisfaction upon a law which, in the case of a poor man, leaves his wife and children unprovided for. It is to be regretted that we should be prevented from passing this measure by what, in my opinion, is a sentimental feeling. There is a notion that if you pass a Bill of this kind you will introduce a new practice. It is supposed that the present law is maintained in the interest of large estates, and, that being the case, I cannot help thinking that your Lordships will incur a considerable amount of odium by rejecting the measure. I do not say that is the effect of the law, but there is a strong feeling among the public that that is the case. It can inflict no grievance upon the owners of large property, who will still retain the power of making such wills as they please, while relieving many persons from a great grievance. In these circumstances, I sincerely hope that your Lordships will consent to pass the Bill.

On Question whether the word ("now") shall stand part of the Motion ?

Their Lordships divided :—Contents 56 ; Not Contents 61 ; Majority 5.

Resolved in the Negative.

Bill to be read 2<sup>a</sup> this day six months.

## BILLS OF SALE BILL.—(No. 7.)

## COMMITTEE.

House in Committee (according to Order).

## Clause 1.

**THE LORD CHANCELLOR:** My Lords, on the Second Reading I called attention to a provision contained in the first clause relating to what are known as hire and sale agreements, and pointed out that in some respects the evils which arise under those agreements were similar to those existing in the case of goods transferred by bills of sale, and that an attempt had been made to deal with the matter in this Bill. I stated at the same time that very grave exception had been taken to the proposal, which it was considered might in many cases lead to injustice and put an end to, or throw insuperable difficulties in the way of, this hire and sale system, which is very prevalent and, as regards certain goods at all events, extremely common and beneficial. On the other hand, I have had representations from trade societies, strongly urging that the matter should be dealt with. I have taken those representations of the opposing views in the matter into my consideration, and I have come to the conclusion that if I were to attempt to retain any provisions of that description in this Bill, and so make it of a contentious nature, it would be a misfortune, inasmuch as the Consolidation Act relating to bills of sale is an important measure, and of somewhat pressing emergency. I have, therefore, upon the whole, come to the conclusion to ask your Lordships to omit the provisions relating to these hire and sale agreements at once. Of course, I will consider whether they can be dealt with by themselves in some subsequent measure. I therefore move to leave out Sub-section C in Clause 1.

Moved, "To leave out Sub-section C in Clause 1."—(*The Lord Herschell.*)

Motion agreed to.

**THE LORD CHANCELLOR:** My Lords, I desired to make that announcement as soon as possible, because the matter is one in which great interest has been taken; and I thought it desirable that the conclusion I have arrived at should become public as soon as possible.

Bill, as amended, ordered to be reported.

House resumed.

## THE YEOMANRY.

## QUESTION. OBSERVATIONS.

**THE EARL OF STRAFFORD** asked the Under Secretary of State for War what changes had lately been effected in the organisation of the Yeomanry. He said that during the last 12 months a Departmental Committee had sat at the War Office upon the organisation of the Yeomanry, and as many of their Lordships held commissions in that force, it might be interesting to them to be furnished with information by the Under Secretary of State on the subject.

**THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (Lord SANDHURST)** said that he should be glad to lay before their Lordships the information he had with regard to the Yeomanry. It was quite true that reorganisation of the forces for the defence of the country was to take place, and the order had been made public, and should come into operation on April 1st. The Yeomanry were not included in the mobilisation scheme for various reasons. Reorganisation, it was found, in a large number of weak corps would have resulted in many tactical and administrative difficulties; their shooting was unsatisfactory; also they were organised in troops, whereas the Regular Cavalry was organised by squadron. Therefore a Departmental Committee was appointed by Mr. Stanhope, and presided over by Mr. Brodrick. The Committee included Sir R. Gipps, now Military Secretary, Colonel Duncombe, Inspector of Yeomanry, and Colonel Grove, in the Adjutant General's Department, he having principal charge of the mobilisation scheme. The Committee reported in favour of a reorganisation. They drew up a Report giving each unit of Yeomanry its proper place in the scheme of mobilisation for defence, recommending that each unit should be of such strength as to properly fill that place; and stating that it was desirable to make the change in time of peace, instead of leaving it till an emergency arose; and that the superfluous teaching staff should be withdrawn from Yeomanry regiments. The withdrawal of this superfluous teaching staff

would relieve the pressure in Regular Cavalry regiments from which the teaching staff were drawn. It was true that such non-commissioned officers were made supernumerary and others were found, but the withdrawals had been found prejudicial, as they were always very good men who took part in the Yeomanry. It was also proposed to reduce the number of adjutants, who were officers serving in the Regular Cavalry. While these reductions would result in some economy, it was not intended to return the sum thus saved to the State, but to give an increased contingent allowance in certain circumstances. The Committee found that in 1892 there were 39 different regiments of Yeomanry, with an establishment of 13,067; the numbers enrolled were 9,869, and the efficient 8,471, an average per regiment of 217. There was great variety in the strength of the regiments. Taking an average, for the purpose of turning out a little more than 200 efficient, one commissioned officer and six non-commissioned officers would be employed. Particular cases were still more remarkable. The Lothian and Berwick Regiment had 116 efficient and four staff sergeants, or one to every 29 men. The East Kent Regiment had 167 efficient and six staff sergeants, or one to 28 efficient. The Hants Regiment had 133 efficient and six on the permanent staff, or one to 22 men; and other instances could be given. Thus it would be seen that a corps was not much stronger than a squadron would require to be for war purposes. The regiment would be too weak for war purposes. It could not be treated as a Cavalry regiment, and "the troops of 20 or 30 men were too small to form a satisfactory unit." The Committee, therefore, proposed that the Yeomanry should be organised on the same lines as the Cavalry, *i.e.*, on the squadron system. It had been deemed advisable that 100, exclusive of officers and permanent staff, was a suitable strength as a maximum for a Yeomanry squadron, and that 70 efficient might form the minimum. The average strength of a troop in 1891 was 35. Thus, taking the minimum, a squadron of 70 efficient would include two troops. Under a proper system of brigading the objections to weak regiments would disappear. With weak regiments the brigade became the

regiment, the regiment the squadron. By the introduction of this squadron system reduction could be made in the permanent staff of each regiment; and by the amalgamation a reduction in the number of adjutants would gradually be effected. But where the adjutant, as would be nearly everywhere the case, became a brigade adjutant, a proposal was made for allowance to the adjutant for an extra horse, and his exemption from certain garrison duties which he was now expected to fulfil. It was also recommended that Yeomanry brigades should, as such, be trained once in three years. The Committee came to the conclusion that though in certain cases certain difficulties might present themselves, they were not likely to be so formidable or so numerous as to warrant the postponement of the proposed changes. It would suffice to say that under the proposed plan the sergeants would be reduced from 230 to 148; a saving would thus occur of about £8,300 per annum. Assuming that the proposed absorption of adjutants had taken place, they would be reduced from 39 to 19, causing an annual saving of about £5,000. This reduction would be gradual, in this way—that as vacancies in adjutancies occurred it was not proposed to fill them up. As regarded the use of the money which would be saved, this part of the question bore directly upon the shooting. Before this Report the shooting training as laid down could really not be considered as a serious matter, though it was acknowledged much was done by the energy and public spirit of officers and men. All that the regulation required was that 40 rounds were to be shot off annually, and the contingent allowance would be earned. That allowance now stood at £2; it was proposed to increase it to £3, but to saddle the extra grant for the years 1893-94 with this condition, that the Yeoman to be efficient must get out of the third class in shooting, and if in two years the Yeoman failed to pass out of the third class he should cease to belong to the corps. It had been represented that this made a very hard case, but he put it to the House whether a man who was so extremely unskilful as not to be able to get out of the third class, and not showing signs of improvement, was worth retaining in the Yeomanry. Moreover, he pointed out that the insistence on in-

creased efficiency in the Volunteers had by no means had the result of reducing the number of efficient, but that this year there were 3,000 more than last year. The Committee, acknowledging that there were certain difficulties and expense about shooting, recommended the payment of 3s. 6d., or one day's pay, for the day on which the man was engaged in his class shooting. Those, briefly sketched out, were the salient points of the reorganisation changes contemplated. A hundred years ago the Yeomanry were created, for the defence of the country; later they were reduced, excepting where it was thought necessary for the aid of the civil power. Now the aim of the Secretary of State, as appeared to have been that of his Predecessor, was to reconstruct them so that they might be of real use for the purpose for which they were originally intended—namely, the defence of the country. It was possible in certain cases a difficulty might arise, and that more work might be thrown on the commissioned officers through the reduction of the adjutants, but the Secretary of State looked to the public spirit of all ranks for the making of the Yeomanry a really efficient addition to the defences of the country.

#### METROPOLITAN HOSPITALS.

##### MOTION FOR PAPERS.

LORD CLINTON moved for—

"Papers and copies of the correspondence which has passed between the Chairman of the Metropolitan Hospitals Committee of this House and the Chief Charity Commissioner on the subject of certain evidence given before that Committee, and the Report of the Committee thereon."

He understood that the noble Lord who was Chairman of the Committee of that House upon the matter had no objection to the Motion.

Moved, That there be laid before the House—

"Papers and copies of the correspondence which has passed between the Chairman of the Metropolitan Hospitals Committee of this House and the Chief Charity Commissioner on the subject of certain evidence given before that Committee, and the Report of the Committee thereon."—(*The Lord Clinton.*)

LORD SANDHURST said he did not oppose the Motion, but as Chairman of the Committee of Inquiry into the Metropolitan Hospitals he desired to say a few words. The correspondence really

consisted of only two letters, which they had answered. What had occurred was, that evidence was tendered by St. Thomas's Hospital before the Committee. No doubt, with perfectly honest intentions, a mistake was made, but was not discovered by the Committee, or by the Chief Charity Commissioner, until the Report had been circulated and the Committee dissolved. Had he been in possession of the facts with which he was now acquainted, paragraphs 5, 6, and 7 would not have found their way into the Report. He had received a request from the Chief Charity Commissioner asking him, as Chairman, to re-summon the Committee, and to take the Chief Commissioner's evidence, but he had pointed out that course was now impossible, and, in reply to another letter, he had suggested that there were plenty of channels of public information, and that the correspondence would probably be sent to *The Times*; but that course had not been adopted. If, after that explanation, the Papers were moved for, they would be produced.

Motion agreed to.

House adjourned at twenty-five minutes past Six o'clock, to Thursday next, a quarter past Four o'clock.

#### HOUSE OF COMMONS,

*Tuesday, 7th March 1893.*

The House met at Two of the clock.

#### PRIVATE BUSINESS.

MIDLAND RAILWAY BILL (*by Order*).

##### SECOND READING.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."

\*MR. A. C. MORTON (Peterborough): I do not think, after the Debate which occurred last Friday, it will be necessary for me to move the Resolution of which I have given notice, "That this Bill be read a second time this day six months." I do, however, think it opportune and right that we should take this opportunity of saying a few words with regard

*Lord Sandhurst*

to the charges of this Railway Company. This is not a personal matter with me, but it is a matter which affects the traders and agriculturists all over the country. It may be asked, What has a Private Bill got to do with railway charges? It may not have much of itself to do with railway charges, but it is well to bear in mind that Parliament has granted to these Railway Companies powers which give them a monopoly, the idea being, in the first place, that such monopolies were granted in the interests of the people, and not in the interests merely of syndicates and companies. Therefore, I think the time has very probably nearly arrived when we should say to these companies—and this one in particular, as we are only dealing with it at present—that unless you work fairly and properly, and use this monopoly which Parliament has given you in the interests of the people of the country as well as yourselves, the time has arrived when we will refuse the concession of all further powers to you whatever. As far as I am personally concerned, although I represent a small constituency, still it is one largely connected with trade, and is a large railway centre, and I am continually having letters and resolutions sent to me with regard to these charges. Of course, I know the promise that has been made that the Companies are going to consider the matter, and the President of the Board of Trade the other night asked us not to be ungenerous or vindictive. I do not desire to be ungenerous or vindictive, and if I did, this is about the last Company in the United Kingdom I desire to show that feeling towards. But we have got to bear in mind the position of affairs. This Company last year, with the other Companies, promised that, although the maximum rates were fixed at a certain high rate, they would not use those powers and charge those maximum rates. But they have entirely broken that promise, and on the 1st January they raised the rates in an extraordinary manner, and practically upset and injured the whole trade and agricultural prospects of this country. Therefore, the Companies cannot charge us with vindictiveness, because it is their own action which has caused us to move in the matter. It is very nearly time this House considered the position of these Companies, and hon. Members

asked themselves whether the period had not nearly arrived when they should refuse to grant further powers until we have got these matters settled. I am aware that Parliament last year and the year before granted these powers, but they were granted under the mistaken notion that the Companies would not use them in the way they have. We are told that you can bring goods from America to London for much less than it costs to send goods to London from some parts of Scotland. I am told the charges on this railway are six or seven times what the charges for similar classes of goods in the United States are; but one would think that we could do this work much cheaper in this country than they could in the United States. I have a letter from a constituent of my own, in which he complains of the extraordinary way in which the Companies make up their accounts. He says that in the case of 2½ cwt. of flour at 1s. per cwt. they make it 2s. 9d. instead of 2s. 6d.; and so on with many other charges. This same constituent tells me that the companies have increased the charge for carriage of another article from 7s. 6d. to 12s. 11d. Another gentleman writes to me and says, "Do not be misled by the Railway Companies, if Mr. Mundella is." I am afraid the Board of Trade itself—through its officials—do not look upon this matter from the traders and agriculturists point of view at all, and that, in all these cases, the companies practically get something a little more than fair play. There are many other matters in connection with these charges that I could bring forward, but all I will say now is, that I do not desire to act vindictively towards this particular company, neither do I desire on the present occasion to take a division on my Amendment. I bear in mind that in the ordinary course this Bill will have to come back again to this House after it has passed the Committee, and then, unless we get these matters satisfactorily settled, I shall reserve my right to move a similar Resolution when the Bill comes on for Third Reading.

SIR JAMES WHITEHEAD (Leicester): I put down a notice in opposition to this Bill because I saw an opportunity of discussing the whole question of railway rates. But since I



gave notice to oppose the Second Reading an occasion has arisen and an opportunity given to this House for an ample discussion of the subject. That being so, I do not intend to proceed with my opposition. I trust that the results of the promised Special Committee will be to give to the traders and agriculturists of the country an equality with the Railway Companies, so that fair and equitable charges may be arrived at. At present the traders are left entirely at the mercy of the Railway Companies. I hope the Special Committee will make such recommendations as will induce the House to pass a Bill that will obviate this. I trust between this and the Third Reading of the Bill for some satisfactory arrangement, but if such an arrangement is not arrived at I shall again address the House on the subject.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE (Mr. MUNDELLA, Sheffield, Brightside) : I am glad my hon. Friends have indicated their intention of withdrawing their opposition to this Bill, and I hope others will follow their example, and all the opposition to this Railway Bill disappear. I say so for this reason : they could not render any service to the traders and public by opposing such Bills as the Bill I have before me. I am quite sure, if they will read the provisions of this Bill, they will see they are mainly to enable the Railway Company to discharge public obligations which the Board of Trade have impressed upon them ; to enable them to give greater facilities to traders in their business, to abolish level crossings, and put bridges over the lines in place of them, and for the widening of the line. These are matters entirely outside the question of rates, and it is to the interest of the public, and to the interest of this House, that these Bills should follow the usual course. I am glad, therefore, that my hon. Friends have taken the course they have, and I hope we shall deal with railway rates entirely apart from these questions. With respect to railway rates, I do not want to dwell upon that matter further than to say I am in receipt daily of many letters thanking the Board of Trade for their intervention, and stating that there is every prospect of a good understanding being arrived at. I trust when the time comes we shall be able to report

to the House that we have brought matters to a very satisfactory conclusion, and I hope the Railway Companies will exercise the opportunity that has been given to them to meet the traders in this matter by reducing the rates to a point which will be satisfactory. I trust the House will allow this Bill to be read a second time.

\*MR. WEIR (Ross and Cromarty) : I regret very much that my hon. Friend does not intend to press the Motion to a Division. I look upon these great Railway Companies as monopolists, who are like Irish and Highland landlords—they have no mercy. As a result of the excessive charges which they have imposed, the Companies have seriously crippled the resources of the traders everywhere, and if these charges are allowed to remain trade will be driven out of the country, and thousands of honest traders will be ruined ; and the consumer will have to pay a higher price for his goods. I have a letter from a gentleman in Arbroath (Mr. James Keith), an engineer, in which he says, among other things—

"We do a large traffic in rough metal castings made in our works in Arbroath, and all of which nearly have to come to London. The traffic is a staple and constant one, and yet the railway rates are prohibitive, so much so that we have to send the whole by steamer from Dundee. We cannot, however, even send these goods by steamer in this way without sending them over the Dundee and Arbroath Railway for 16 miles from Arbroath to Dundee by rail, which means that the Railway Company can so raise this short rail rate as almost to make it prohibitive on the 'through' traffic rate by steamer or Shipping Company. This the Railway Company have actually done, and they refuse point blank to the Board of Trade to reduce it. . . . Even the old rates, 41s. 8d. a ton, for such traffic were at least 50 per cent. too high, and they are now much higher. When I state that the same goods are sent from New York to Chicago, a distance of 1,000 miles by rail, for 16s. 8d. per ton, you will see that, even at the old rate of 41s. 8d. per ton for 450 miles by rail from Arbroath to London, the charge is seven times what it is over the American railways when proportionate distance is taken into account. Also be it noted that the Americans can send similar goods to ours from New York to Glasgow by sea, and then from Glasgow to London by rail in this country, and deliver these goods in London, for one-half the carriage charge that we have to pay should we dare to send the same goods only from Glasgow to London over the same rails."

I think the Board of Trade is much too gentle with the Railway Companies, and that more drastic measures ought to be adopted towards them.

*Sir James Whitehead*

**MR. T. W. RUSSELL** (Tyrone, S.) : I have no doubt the President of the Board of Trade expressed the official view on this question, but I question very much whether that will turn out to be the view of the House of Commons. I received a letter a day or two ago from a constituent of mine, a manufacturer in the County Tyrone, who distinctly stated that the difference between the rates make it a question whether the small factories in that country should be continued, or whether in the future Belfast should not be allowed to have a monopoly. I can tell the President of the Board of Trade that no official view will be allowed to prevail over our constituencies, and that if he does not stir himself to bring the Railway Companies to their senses they will take the matter into their own hands.

**\*MR. TOMLINSON** (Preston) : In this case the traders have undoubtedly had extreme provocation, but under the circumstances stated by the President of the Board of Trade I quite agree with the view that it is undesirable to press this opposition to a Division. At the same time, I do desire to enter a protest against the remarks of the right hon. Gentleman. He has spoken of the satisfaction with which he has received certain representations from the Railway Company.

**MR. MUNDELLA** : No. I spoke of the communications I had received from traders.

**\*MR. TOMLINSON** : No doubt it is easy enough for the companies to come to some arrangements with the large traders, but the chief difficulty arises in the case of the small traders, of whom—in my constituency, for instance—a large number have been hardly hit by the increase in the rates. There is one other matter to which I should like to refer. The Railway Companies are using their powers of charging short-distance rates in a very unfair manner. A clause was inserted in the London and North Western Act dealing with this question, and under that clause the company is claiming the right to alter their charges in a very peculiar way. I will give an instance. Goods are carried by the Lancashire and Yorkshire Company partly over the Lancashire and Yorkshire and partly over the North Western line, and instead of there being one rate for the

whole distance, the latter company, by mutual arrangement, take over the traffic at a point only a quarter of a mile distant from the destination of the goods, a long way past the junction between the lines of the two Companies, and then for the extra quarter of a mile a fresh and short-distance rate is imposed. I do not think Parliament ever intended that short-distance rates should be imposed in that way. I hope that the right hon. Gentleman will, amongst other matters, take into his consideration the manner in which short-distance charges are attempted to be imposed.

**\*COLONEL HOWARD VINCENT** (Sheffield, Central) : I wish to ask the President of the Board of Trade if he fully appreciated the statement of the hon. Member for Ross and Cromarty, that American metal goods can be sent to New York from Glasgow by steamer, and from Glasgow to London by train, and yet be delivered at half the cost which would be incurred for the transit of English goods from Glasgow to London by train? I earnestly press him to use every power he possesses as President of the Board of Trade to prevent preferential rates thus being granted to foreign goods as against our own traders.

**SIR THOMAS LEA** (Londonderry, S.) : I have no doubt my right hon. Friend the President of the Board of Trade is quite right in his advice as regards this Bill, which is as much in the interests of the public as of the Railway Company. But it affords our only chance of attacking the companies, and hence the justification for opposing it. Some years ago I was interested in a large building in the centre of England, and we found it was actually cheaper to purchase the iron girders used in it in Belgium and bring them over here, because the cost of transit was so much less than that which would be incurred if the girders were obtained from an English manufacturer. The State railways in Belgium charge far lower rates than any of the English lines, and as our own companies give preferential rates to Continental goods traffic a premium is placed upon foreign manufactures, to the great detriment of home trade and labour.

**\*MR. A. C. MORTON** : I do not intend to withdraw my opposition to the other Bills, unless the companies satisfy the public demands.

SIR F. MAPPIN (York, W.R., Hal-lamshire): I think all Members of the House may well be satisfied with the statement given by the President of the Board of Trade last Friday night, on the strength of the communications he had received from several of the principal Railway Companies, in which a pledge was given that no rates should be advanced more than 5 per cent. unless under very exceptional circumstances. I may say, on behalf of the Midland Company, that they arrived at that decision on the 17th February, and their determination, no doubt, influenced the other companies very considerably in coming to a like arrangement. I therefore hope that the House will not reject this Bill, knowing, as hon. Members must do, that the Midland Company has always endeavoured to benefit the working public, and to carry the produce of the country at reasonable and moderate rates.

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a second time, and committed.

MR. WHITMORE (Chelsea): When will the Instruction be moved?

MR. M'LAGAN (Linlithgow): On Thursday.

## QUESTIONS.

### FOREIGN IMPORT TARIFFS.

MR. H. FARQUHARSON (Dorset, W.): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade what countries permit the importation of goods from any foreign country at a more favourable rate than goods from the United Kingdom?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Sir E. GREY, Northumberland, Berwick): In the Spanish West Indies, Brazil, and San Domingo the produce of the United States is admitted at a more favourable rate than the produce of the United Kingdom. Brazil and Portugal grant more favourable treatment to goods from each other than they extend to like products imported from elsewhere.

\*COLONEL HOWARD VINCENT: Have any attempts been made to obtain the introduction into Brazil of British goods on equally advantageous terms with American?

SIR E. GREY: Yes, Sir; efforts have been made and negotiations opened, but Brazil has not at present shown any willingness to enter into an arrangement.

### FREE EDUCATION IN LIVERPOOL.

MR. SNAPE (Lancashire, S.E., Heywood): I beg to ask the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education whether he is aware that Mrs. Annie Jones, a widow, applied at the end of January last at Walton Lane School, under the Liverpool School Board, for free education for her four children, which was refused until she had been subjected to an inquiry into her circumstances, and until the matter had been submitted to the School Attendance Committee, and that in consequence of this delay she is still required to pay fees; and whether such inquiries into the circumstances of the parents who request free education for their children are sanctioned by the Department?

\*MR. LAWRENCE (Liverpool, Abercromby): Before the right hon. Gentleman answers the question, may I ask him if it is a fact that no school authority whatever refused Mrs. Jones's request; that no inquiries whatever were made into her circumstances; that the delay of the school managers in replying to her application was due to the fact that it arrived just after one meeting, and that the next meeting in the ordinary course had to be postponed in consequence of the visit of Her Majesty's Inspector; that there are plenty of free schools in the same neighbourhood; and that the matter got into the local newspapers owing to a manager who found time to write to them rather than to summon his colleagues to deal with the case.

THE VICE PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL (Mr. ACLAND, York, W.R., Rotherham): I will state the facts of the case. I understand that Mrs. Jones, whose husband was refused free education for his children at Walton Lane School last autumn, went to the head master in January last after her husband's death and applied for free education. This request was not granted till Thursday last, after consideration of her case by a meeting of the managers. The managers have now made new arrangements to avoid such delay. As to whether the head master asked any questions as to her circumstances, the statements are con-

flicting, and I am unable to give positive information. Subject to what I have now said, the statement of the hon. Member opposite (Mr. Lawrence) is, I believe, generally correct. There may be free schools within reach of Mrs. Jones, but it is not a matter of surprise that she wishes to keep her children in the school to which they have been accustomed to go, even if her case has to be specially considered. I much regret that the Liverpool School Board has not seen its way to make all its schools free, like many other large School Boards, so that there might be no delay, or any kind of inquiry. The Department strongly discountenances all inquiries into the circumstances of parents in connection with their right to free education under the Act of 1891.

**MR. LAWRENCE :** Is not my statement absolutely correct : that there was no inquiry ?

**MR. ACLAND :** As to that, the statements are conflicting, and I can give no decided opinion one way or the other.

#### TRADE DEPRESSION.

**COLONEL HOWARD VINCENT :** I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade if he can state in how many industries there have been reductions of wages between 1st September, 1892, and 28th February 1893 ; how many cotton mills and tinplate mills have suspended working during that period ; and how many thousand operatives were thereby deprived of their means of livelihood ?

**MR. MUNDELLA :** Particulars as to changes of wages, as far as Trade Unions are affected, are published in the Annual Trade Union Reports, and the figures for 1892 will be published shortly. The Labour Department is informed that between September 1st, 1892, and February 28th, 1893, 45 tinplate mills were suspended ; 41 mills which had suspended before September 1st were still closed at the end of February, 3,000 operatives were affected by the suspension of the total 86 mills. No reduction of wages has taken place. With regard to cotton mills, owing to the dispute in that trade, which has lasted now for 17 weeks, 410 mills and sheds have been suspended, and 50,000 operatives directly affected thereby. No reduction of wages has taken place.

**MR. FLYNN (Cork, N.) :** Was the closing of the tinplate mills due to the operation of the M'Kinley Tariff ?

**MR. MUNDELLA :** Certainly.

#### THE COLERAINE REFUSE DEPÔT.

**MR. PINKERTON (Galway) :** I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland (1) if he is aware that on the 26th of May, 1892, a letter was written to the Secretary to the Local Government Board, on behalf of a number of influential inhabitants, calling attention to the fact that the Coleraire Town Commissioners, as the Urban Sanitary Authority, had established a depôt for the sweepings of the streets, at the corner of Circular Road, Coleraire, opposite a number of dwelling-houses, and on the way to the leading road from Portrush and Portstewart ; (2) if complaint was made that the depôt was an eyesore, and, in warm weather, a nuisance ; (3) and if, through the intervention of the Local Government Board, any action was taken by the Town Commissioners to abate the nuisance ; and, if not, will he see his way, in the interest of the public health, to cause its removal ?

**\*THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. J. MORLEY, Newcastle-upon-Tyne) :** The facts are as stated in paragraphs 1 and 2. As regards paragraph 3, the Local Government Board report that the Commissioners have secured a new site for the deposit of the street sweepings.

#### BOARD OF TRADE CERTIFICATES IN THE MERCANTILE MARINE.

**SIR EDWARD HILL (Bristol, S.) :** I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether, in view of the fact that no officers can be employed in merchant vessels whose knowledge and competency have not been certified by the Board of Trade, the Board has the power of dismissing or suspending them without reference to the owner ?

**MR. MUNDELLA :** Only officers of foreign-going ships, or of home trade passenger ships, are required to hold certificates. The Board of Trade have no power to dismiss or suspend officers, but the Merchant Shipping Acts provide machinery for depriving them of their certificates where incompetency or misconduct may be proved.

## OUTRAGES ON CATTLE IN IRELAND.

MR. T. W. RUSSELL: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether it has come to his knowledge that within the last 10 days cattle, belonging to Mr. John Bolton Massy, of Ballywine, County Tipperary, were brutally maimed and houghed during the night; and if he can devise any means of protection for dumb and helpless animals from cruelty of this kind?

\*MR. J. MORLEY: I have received a Report of this brutal outrage, and the police are, I can assure the hon. Member, using every endeavour to discover and bring to justice the perpetrators. The hon. Member is well aware of the difficulties that meet every Irish Government in connection with cruel and detestable offences of this kind.

## PRIESTS AND THE MEATH ELECTION.

MR. T. W. RUSSELL: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether his attention has been drawn to the case of the Rev. Father Casey, of County Meath, who was returned for trial, in August last, to the next Assizes for occasioning grievous bodily harm to an old man of 70, and who has been tried at the recent Assizes in the county where the offence was committed, and acquitted; why he was not tried at the next Assizes after the commission of the offence, to wit, the Winter Assizes; and whether, if he had been so tried, the trial would have taken place in another county?

\*MR. J. JORDAN (Meath, S.): Has the attention of the right hon. Gentleman been directed to the Charge of Mr. Justice Johnson to the Grand Jury, in which he said he condemned the conduct of this man said to be 70 years of age, and did he not justify the conduct of Father Casey, and virtually charge the Jury in favour of his acquittal?

MR. T. W. RUSSELL: I believe the man assaulted was not 70 years old.

\*MR. J. MORLEY: The story is this. Two clergymen, the Rev. Mr. Clarke and the Rev. Mr. Casey, were tried at the recent Assizes for assaults alleged to have been committed at the Meath elections. Mr. Clarke was convicted and Mr. Casey was acquitted. The Judge laid stress upon the evidence in

favour of Mr. Casey, which led to the conclusion that he had acted in self-defence. The Judge was not only satisfied with the verdict of acquittal, but also expressed his entire and absolute approval of all the verdicts, both of conviction and acquittal, that had been found by the Meath jurors during the Assizes in question.

MR. T. W. RUSSELL: The right hon. Gentleman has not told the House why Father Casey was not tried at the Winter Assizes.

\*MR. J. MORLEY: The answer to that question is perfectly simple. He was not tried because he was a bailed prisoner, and it is not usual to try bailed prisoners at the Winter Assizes unless there are special reasons to the contrary.

## EDINBURGH SCIENCE AND ART MUSEUM.

MR. PAUL (Edinburgh, S.): I beg to ask the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education whether there is any reason why the attendants in the Science and Art Museum at Edinburgh should be treated less favourably than those at South Kensington, first in receiving as their highest rate of pay 8d. an hour instead of 1s., and secondly in attaining that rate only by chance when a vacancy occurs, and not after a term of years as a matter of right; and if there is no sufficient ground for maintaining the inequality, whether he will give South Kensington terms to the attendants at Edinburgh?

MR. ACLAND: I believe the facts mentioned in the hon. Member's question are substantially correct. The pay of the attendants in the Science and Art Museum in Edinburgh was settled with the Treasury in 1874, and I presume the scale was then fixed bearing in mind the relative cost of living, &c., in Edinburgh and London respectively. But I will inquire into the matter, and if necessary I will apply to the Treasury for a modification of the present scale.

## POTATO DISEASE IN IRELAND.

MR. E. BARRY (Cork Co., S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland what Report did the Land Commission issue on the subject of the experiments made last year, with a view to checking the spread of the

potato disease in Clonakilty and other unions throughout Ireland; if the experiments were successful, will the Land Commission cause posters to be printed and circulated, for the information of potato planters, showing the different chemicals used, distinguishing the proportion of chemicals in such mixture, and the weight of sound and diseased potatoes obtained from the treated and untreated plots; if Boards of Guardians may procure spraying machines for use throughout the several unions of Ireland, in order to familiarise the people with the means of destroying this national pest; and is it the intention of the Land Commission to continue the experiments this year, and whether they will commence operations in the South earlier than they did last year?

\***MR. J. MORLEY**: The Report of the Land Commission on the subject mentioned has not yet been issued, and is at present in the hands of the printer. Upon its submission to the Lord Lieutenant the whole matter will receive the careful attention of Government.

#### THE CASE OF WILLIAM CALLAGHAN.

**MR. MAINS** (Donegal, N.): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Board of Trade if he would state the grounds on which the Board have declined to act upon the recommendation of the Irish Lights Board, and grant William Callaghan, lightkeeper, full pension upon his services from 1848; and whether his case will be re-considered?

**THE SECRETARY TO THE BOARD OF TRADE** (Mr. BURT, Morpeth): I answered this question on a previous occasion, but I may now add that the Board of Trade have agreed to the grant of a pension to William Callaghan in respect of his services from 1859, the year in which he was appointed an assistant lightkeeper under the Irish Lights Commissioners. I am informed that for some years previous to 1859 William Callaghan was employed as a painter by the Lights Board, but in accordance with the general rule of the Public Service this period has not been taken into account in calculating the amount of the pension.

#### OUTDOOR OFFICERS OF CUSTOMS.

**MR. SEYMOUR KEAY** (Elgin and Nairn): I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with regard to the reply recently given to the Memorial from the outdoor officers of the Customs Department, to the effect that the Treasury refuse to re-open the question of the alleged grievances of the Memorialists on the ground that these have been already dealt with by the late Chancellor of the Exchequer, in a Minute dated 24th March, 1891, whether he is aware that that Minute does not deal with the chief grievance urged by the Memorialists—namely, that since the salary of their grade was fixed they have come to be employed on entirely different work, requiring a high degree of intelligence and involving largely increased responsibility; and whether Her Majesty's Government will now institute an inquiry into the claim of the Memorialists to increased salary?

**THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY** (Sir J. T. HIBBERT, Oldham): My right hon. Friend has asked me to answer this question. I have satisfied myself, by personally reading the evidence and proceedings before the late Chancellor of the Exchequer, that the question of the salaries of outdoor officers of Customs was fully and specifically considered by him, and I cannot admit that the question was not dealt with in the Minute referred to. On the contrary, that Minute expressly declares that the concessions made must be held to cover the whole ground. In these circumstances, there is no ground for instituting a further inquiry.

#### IRISH CIVIL GOVERNMENT CHARGES.

**MR. SEYMOUR KEAY**: I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether he will give the particulars of the estimated Civil Government charges in Ireland which are met out of Local Taxation Revenue, amounting this year to £358,000, as stated on page 5 of the Return showing the effect of the financial proposals in the Government of Ireland Bill, in the same way as the particulars are given on page 4 of the Civil Government charges which are charged on the Votes; and whether he will give similar particulars of the Civil Government charges which are met from the

Exchequer Contribution charged on the Consolidated Fund by "The Purchase of Land (Ireland) Act, 1881," in the same way as the particulars are given on page 4 of the other Civil charges which are charged on that Fund?

\*SIR J. T. HIBBERT: On the assumption that the estimated figures of Revenue for 1892-3 are realised the Local Taxation Revenue of Ireland would be appropriated as follows:—Out of the £234,000 on account of half the Probate Duties (51 and 52 Vict., cap. 60) £5,000 would go to the Royal Dublin Society for improving the breed of horses and cattle, £114,500 (half the balance) to Boards of Guardians in fixed proportions in aid of poor rate, and £114,500 (the other half of the balance) to Road Authorities, urban and rural, in aid of their rates. Of the £124,000 under the Local Taxation (Customs and Exoise) Act, 1890, £78,000 would be appropriated for National schools in proportion to numbers in attendance, and the balance of £46,000 to the Intermediate Education Board. As regards the Exchequer Contribution of £40,000, I should explain that this sum at present goes to form a reserve fund under the Purchase of Land Act, 1891; and when that fund has reached the sum of £200,000 the annual contribution would be applicable towards providing labourers' cottages.

MR. FLYNN: Will the right hon. Gentleman lay that answer on the Table of the House?

SIR J. T. HIBBERT: I hope it will appear in the papers to-morrow.

#### CORDITE.

MR. COCHRANE (Ayshire, N.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether he is aware that Cordite gunpowder, as now being introduced into both Services (and mentioned in the First Lord of the Admiralty's Memorandum), is claimed to be an infringement of Nobel's patent; whether notice of this was given to the War Office two years ago, and ever since has been under their consideration; whether any litigation on this subject is pending, and whether the War Office will take every step in their power to obtain an early decision of the Law Courts to this long-pending controversy; and if he will state when a judgment on the matter may be anticipated?

*Mr. Seymour Keay*

\*THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN, Stirling, &c.): The answer to the first three paragraphs of the hon. Member's question is, Yes. The question is before the Law Courts, and beyond the control of the War Office. I am not able to say when judgment will be pronounced.

#### THE IRISH POLICE AND PUBLIC MEETINGS.

SIR THOMAS LEA: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland if the statement is correct that the police in the Newry district have orders to attend all Unionist meetings, and report the speeches and what takes place; and, if so, whether it is intended this should be extended to all meetings in Ireland?

\*MR. J. MORLEY: The statement is not correct. There is no foundation for it.

MR. MC CARTAN (Down, S.): Is the right hon. Gentleman aware of the fact that at Unionist meetings in Ulster speakers are now in the habit of giving expression to the most disloyal sentiments?

\*MR. WEBB (Waterford, W.): Is it not the fact that for years past Government reporters have attended out-door meetings all over Ireland in favour of Home Rule and Land Reform where united armed resistance to the law has never been counselled?

\*MR. J. MORLEY: I believe the statements of the hon. Gentleman are generally correct.

#### IRISH FARM PRODUCE.

SIR THOMAS LEA: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland when the Return of comparative prices of Irish farm produce will be ready for circulation?

\*MR. J. MORLEY: Inquiry is being made.

#### PLEURO-PNEUMONIA IN CANADA.

MR. WILLIAM WHITELAW (Perth): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Agriculture whether his attention has been called to a Report, presented to the Canadian Parliament, declaring that no case of pleuro-pneumonia had existed in the Dominion for several years past; and whether he pro-

poses to take any further action with regard to the importation of Canadian cattle in consequence of this Report?

**THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF AGRICULTURE** (Mr. H. GARDNER, Essex, Saffron Walden): I have received, through the Colonial Office, a copy of a Report of a Committee of the Canadian Privy Council, in which it is stated that the Reports of the Veterinary Surgeons who have been engaged in an investigation of the matter establish that pleuro-pneumonia was not found in any of the localities whence the animals exported by the *Monkseaton* and *Hurona* were traced to have come, and further, that the disease had never been known or heard of in any of them. The Reports in question are equally positive in their declaration of such freedom from disease in relation to the whole of the Dominion. The Report of the Committee and other documents on the same subject are at the present moment under my consideration, and I hope in the course of a few days to announce the course which we propose to take in the matter.

#### SCOTCH PRISON CLERKS' GRIEVANCES.

**MR. WILLIAM WHITELAW**: I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland whether any progress has been made with the inquiry into the complaints of the Scotch prison clerks during the last month; and if he can name a date not later than which he will be able to come to a decision upon this subject?

**THE SECRETARY FOR SCOTLAND** (Sir G. TREVELYAN, Glasgow, Bridgeton): The inquiry was concluded, and the recommendations of the Scottish Office were sent on to the Treasury, with whom the question now rests.

#### TUBERCULOSIS.

**MR. WILLIAM WHITELAW**: I beg to ask the President of the Board of Agriculture if he can state the number of home-bred cattle whose carcasses were condemned on account of tuberculosis during last year?

**MR. H. GARDNER**: The condemnation of tuberculous carcasses, on the ground that they are unfit for the food of man, takes place at the instance of the Medical Officer of Health or Inspector of Nuisances in conformity with the provisions of Sections 116 and 117 of the

Public Health Act, 1875, and I possess no information with regard to the proceedings so taken.

#### THE ROYAL COMMISSION ON LAND.

**MR. MACGREGOR** (Inverness-shire): I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland whether, in view of the fact that the fishermen from the Isle of Skye and other parts of the West Coast must soon leave their homes for the Spring fishing, he will arrange that the Royal Commission on Land should begin its labours at an early date so as to enable these men to give the necessary evidence before the Commission?

**SIR G. TREVELYAN**: The Royal Commission expect to begin their inquiry about the end of this month or the beginning of April. It must be left to them to arrange the order of their proceedings, so as best to attain their object; but I shall be happy to call the notice of the Chairman to the suggestion of the hon. Member. I believe the Commission will meet this week in Edinburgh.

**\*MR. WEIR**: Will the right hon. Gentleman also suggest to the Royal Commission on Deer Forests to visit the island of Lewis at an early date?

**SIR G. TREVELYAN**: The gentlemen who compose that Commission will no doubt arrange their order of procedure.

#### IRISH LOCAL GRANTS IN AID.

**MR. SEYMOUR KEAY**: I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury what was the total amount of Imperial grants for local purposes in Ireland voted by Parliament, and issued under the authority of "The Appropriation Act, 1892?"

**\*SIR J. T. HIBBERT**: If the hon. Member refers to the grants for local purposes for 1892-3 as set out in the Purchase of Land Act, 1891, Section 5 (1) b, the provision voted under the several heads amounts to £1,006,326, made up as follows:—Rates, £33,000; Model Schools and National Schools, £744,995; Industrial Schools, £11,418; Workhouse Schools, Poor Law Medical Grants, and Health Officers, £99,700; Pauper Lunatics, £117,213. The Treasury cannot say how much of this, being payable to towns, is not applicable to the contingent portion of the Guarantee Fund under the Act.



## INFANTRY DRILL BOOK.

VISCOUNT NEWARK (Notts., Newark) : I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether the Provisional Infantry Drill Book issued last year has now been finally adopted ; and, if not, whether the Auxiliary Forces are, in future, to be required to learn and unlearn experimental systems ?

\*MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN : The Infantry Drill Book of 1892 is still provisional. When it is finally adopted a revised edition, showing the alterations which have been approved, will be issued ; the Militia and Volunteers are required to practise the drill in force for the time being for the Regular Forces.

## THE LANCASHIRE COTTON STRIKE.

MR. SCHWANN (Manchester, N.E.) : I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether his attention has been called to the statement in *The Middleton Guardian and Prestwich Advertiser* of 4th March, that at Bury eight men from Royton and Oldham were lately brought before the Magistrates for seeking help from their friendly neighbours during the strike which is now proceeding in the cotton districts of Lancashire ; whether it is a fact that they were all found to be genuine operatives, and that four were playing musical instruments, whilst four collected from the charitable public ; whether the Magistrates were correct in telling them that they were violating the law ; and is it illegal for cotton operatives to play musical instruments in the streets and to collect funds from passers by ?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. ASQUITH, Fife, E.) : I must ask my hon. Friend to postpone his question, as I have not at present had time to receive a reply from the Magistrates with whom I am in communication on the subject.

MR. J. BURNS (Battersea) : I hope the Home Secretary, while making the investigation, will ascertain if among the Magistrates were any masters whose men are on strike, or who are in any way involved in the dispute.

## SCOTCH OFFICE MESSENGERS.

MR. ROBERT WALLACE (Edinburgh, E.) : I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland whether he can state what

progress has been made with the inquiry into the question of messengers and others in the Scotch Public Departments taking remunerative employment as waiters during office hours ; and what he proposes to do in the matter ?

SIR G. TREVELYAN : The inquiry has been made. The Treasury inform us that in the Department for which they are responsible they find that the messengers go out only after office hours, or on days which are invariably deducted from their annual leave. Even under these circumstances the Treasury have ordered that no leave shall be granted unless the duties of the office clearly admit it. The other Departments all answer in the same sense. In the Register House, which is perhaps the largest, there are eight attendants, only one of whom ever takes occasional employment as a waiter after office hours or in his holidays.

## DISMISSAL OF PRISON WARDERS.

MR. KEIR-HARDIE (West Ham, S.) : I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department on what grounds the Governor has refused to state the reasons two warders named Potter and Winn were dismissed from Strangeways Prison, Manchester, on 24th January, 1893 ; and whether it is in accordance with the conditions regulating the employment of warders to dismiss them without assigning any reason for so doing ; and, if not, will he state the reasons which induced the Governor of Strangeways Prison to dismiss these men ?

MR. ASQUITH : By a telegram just received from the Governor of the prison I learn that he did, in the presence of the chief warden, acquaint the two officers with the reasons for their discharge on the morning of the day on which they were dismissed. Potter and Winn were both discharged by the Prison Commissioners for trafficking and general inefficiency as prison officers.

## ALLEGED INFRINGEMENT OF THE FACTORY AND WORKSHOPS ACT.

MR. KEIR-HARDIE : I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether on the 13th December, 1892, a summons, at the instance of Mr. E. Gould, a Factory Inspector, against a

printer named Robson for an infringement of the Factory and Workshops Act, was called at the Mansion House Police Court, and allowed to drop owing to Mr. Gould not putting in an appearance; and whether he can inform the House why Mr. Gould was absent?

MR. ASQUITH: Mr. Gould made a mistake in the day, and consequently did not appear as prosecutor in December; but he subsequently prosecuted the firm for a similar offence on the 16th February, and obtained a conviction.

#### THE STATIONERY OFFICE AND BOOK BINDERS.

MR. DALZIEL (Kirkcaldy, &c.): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether his attention has been drawn to a letter in the *Daily Chronicle* of 6th March, signed by Frederick Rogers, President of the Vellum Binders Trade Society, in which it is stated that account book binding executed for Her Majesty's Stationery Office is performed at "very nearly starvation wages;" whether there is any foundation for such statement; and whether, in regard to such work, steps are taken to ensure that the Resolution of the House respecting the payment of Trade Union rate of wages is adhered to?

\*SIR J. T. HIBBERT: I have seen the letter referred to, but I have no reason to believe that the contractors for book binding are not complying with the terms of the Resolution of the House of Commons of February 13th, 1891. The Stationery Office have already taken steps for insuring compliance with that Resolution by the issue of a Circular to contractors.

#### SENIOR TELEGRAPHISTS AT THE CENTRAL TELEGRAPH OFFICE.

MR. DALZIEL: I beg to ask the Postmaster General if he will explain why the decision of his Department, with regard to the Petition received on 12th April last from the Senior Telegraphists employed at the Central Telegraph Office setting forth certain alleged grievances, has not yet been made known?

THE POSTMASTER GENERAL (MR. A. MORLEY, Nottingham, E.): The Petition referred to repeated a number of points on which decisions had been previously conveyed to the petitioners,

and I fear that with the exception of an addition to the number of the class of Assistant Superintendents, which, I am glad to say, has now been sanctioned by the Treasury, I am not in a position to accede to the prayer of the Petition. The answer has been delayed pending the decision of the Treasury on the point mentioned.

#### THE IRISH CONGESTED DISTRICTS BOARD AND RELIEF WORKS.

MR. HORACE PLUNKETT (Dublin Co., S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether his attention has been called to a statement in *The Freeman's Journal* of 3rd March, 1893, and other newspapers, to the effect that the Congested Districts Board are about to expend £9,520 on relief works in County Donegal; whether, as a matter of Law, expenditure upon relief works, in the ordinary acceptance of the term, is within the powers of the Board; and whether he is aware that the works projected in County Donegal have reference only to permanent improvement of certain congested areas, although their execution may in some cases be timed so as to avert exceptional distress?

\*MR. J. MORLEY: I would ask the hon. Member to postpone this question until Friday next, when I hope to be able to reply to it and another on the same subject, which was addressed to me last night.

#### THE SHIPWASH LIGHT.

MR. EVERETT (Suffolk, Woodbridge): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he will give instructions to have the Shipwash Light connected by wire with the Aldborough Lifeboat Station?

MR. MUNDELLA: The connection of the Shipwash Light Vessel and the Aldborough Coast Guard Station is one of the recommendations made in the recent Report of the Royal Commission. This Report is still under the consideration of the Treasury and the Postmaster General.

#### REDUCTION OF STAFF IN THE ENFIELD SMALL ARMS FACTORY.

MR. A. C. MORTON (Peterborough): I beg to ask the Secretary of

te for War whether his attention has been drawn to the statement that the staff at the Enfield Small Arms Factory is being still further reduced; and, if so, whether the work is being given to private factories as last year?

**THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY TO THE WAR OFFICE** (Mr. WOODALL, Hanley): As stated on Thursday last, it is feared that further reduction in the amount of labour at Enfield and elsewhere will have to take place. As regards rifles, no fresh orders have been given to the trade since 1890; but for swords and sword-bayonets the usual allocation of orders between Enfield and private factories has been made.

#### THE ROYAL IRISH CONSTABULARY.

**MR. WYNDHAM** (Dover): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he will state the number of Royal Irish Constabulary now serving in Ireland in addition to the free quota triennially distributed, distinguishing between the reserve force, the revenue force, Constabulary in excess of the normal establishment (a) in counties at the requisition of Magistrates, (b) in counties proclaimed as disturbed by the Lord Lieutenant, (c) in cities under special legislation; and whether, in view of the admitted inability of the Government to augment during this year the free quota in Clare, he will consider the expediency of providing additional forces from the reserve or by other methods, rather than by recruiting, which must entail the creation of fresh vested interests?

**\*MR. J. MORLEY**: The present authorised strength of the Royal Irish Constabulary is as follows:—Free quota, 10,006; reserve force, 400; revenue force, 400; extra force—(a) In counties, at the requisition of Magistrates, 181; (b) under proclamation, 525; (c) in cities, under special Acts, 348; total force, 11,860. Arrangements have been made for sending at once 50 men of the reserve force to Clare.

**MR. W. REDMOND** (Clare, E.): May I ask whether the Government will re-consider their intention in regard to reinforcing the police in Clare, having in view the fact that that county is in a better state now than it was last year when the late Government withdrew the police force?

**\*MR. J. MORLEY**: In some respects, no doubt, the county is in a better state, but in some respects it is not. I do not think we are likely to re-consider a decision arrived at only 48 hours ago.

**MR. W. REDMOND**: I beg to give notice that at the proper time on the Estimates I will call attention to this matter.

#### CONSTABULARY IN COUNTY CLARE.

**MR. ARNOLD-FORSTER** (Belfast, W.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland what was the actual strength of the Royal Irish Constabulary establishment in the County Clare on the 1st March, 1st April, and 22nd August, 1892, respectively? The hon. Gentleman had also given notice of the following question:—To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether the Grand Jury of the County Clare, in their resolution of 3rd March, 1892, recommended the reduction of the county establishment as stated by the Chief Secretary, or only the reduction of the extra force and the increase of the "Free" force?

**\*MR. J. MORLEY**: In regard to these questions inquiry is being made.

#### THE COLLOONEY AND CLAREMORRIS RAILWAY.

**MR. PATRICK M'HUGH** (Leitrim, N.): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether all provisional contracts for the construction of the Collooney and Claremorris line of railway are now closed; and, if so, for what period has all work on the proposed line been stopped; has any contract been entered into for the completion of the line; and, if so, with whom, and when will the work of construction be resumed; is he aware that in their last Report the Commissioners of Public Works (Ireland) give as the probable date of the completion of this line the end of 1893, and under existing circumstances will the line be completed at that date; is he also aware that the Waterford and Limerick Railway Company are at present promoting in the House of Lords an Act to empower them, amongst other things, to abandon and relinquish the construction of the Collooney and Claremorris line; and does he propose to take any steps; and,

if so, what steps, to secure the speedy completion of this line?

\*SIR J. T. HIBBERT: This question only appeared on the Notice Paper this morning, and I, therefore, have to ask the hon. Member to postpone it for a day or two.

#### THE SANDGATE DISASTER.

MR. AKERS-DOUGLAS (Kent, St. Augustine's): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether his attention has been called to the catastrophe which has befallen the town of Sandgate by a serious landslip, resulting in the destruction of some 200 houses, and whether he is aware that this disaster has been attributed by a public meeting of the inhabitants to the use of dynamite in connection with the blowing-up of the wrecks of the *Calypso* and the *Benvenue*; whether he is also aware that in September last, prior to the destruction of the latter vessel, a public meeting was held at which, in view of the damage done to property by the explosives employed in the destruction of the *Calypso*, the authorities were urged to abandon their determination to blow up the *Benvenue*, and whether a resolution protesting against the proposed explosions was passed by this meeting and forwarded to every member of the Trinity Board; and whether, under these circumstances, Her Majesty's Government are prepared to give compensation for the damage which has been done?

MR. MUNDELLA: My attention has been called to the sad calamity which has befallen the town of Sandgate, and to the public meeting which has been subsequently held there on the subject. In June last, I understand, the Sandgate Local Board called the attention of the Board of Trade to the rumoured intention of dispersing the wreck of the *Benvenue* by explosives, but the Board of Trade had no power to interfere with the statutory discretion vested in the Trinity House by the Removal of Wrecks Act. There is no evidence that the recent subsidence has been caused by the dispersion of the wreck; indeed, I have seen it attributed to a more probable cause. But in no case can Her Majesty's Government be held to be liable to pay compensation.

MR. JAMES LOWTHER (Kent, Thanet): Do I understand that the Trinity Board is an irresponsible body, not subject to the control of Parliament?

MR. MUNDELLA: The Trinity Board is subject to the control of Parliament. They act under statutory powers in the removal of wrecks. It is not believed that what the Trinity Board did in this case had anything to do with the recent unfortunate occurrence.

#### THE KINSALE HARBOUR PIER DEBT.

MR. MORROGH: I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury if the Treasury has yet arrived at a decision with respect to the statement forwarded, November last, by the Kinsale Harbour Commissioners, referring to the harbour pier debt; and, if so, when will he submit such decision to the Kinsale Harbour Board?

\*SIR J. T. HIBBERT: The Treasury have carefully considered this question, and have come to the conclusion that if any arrears of principal and interest now outstanding are discharged, and if the current instalments of interest and principal are paid in full, and punctually, this year, they will ask Parliament to vote in the Estimates for 1894-5 a sum of £1,000 as a grant in reduction of the loan.

#### RIGHTS OF FISHING IN SCOTCH WATERS.

MR. SEYMOUR KEAY: I beg to ask the Lord Advocate whether, inasmuch as prescriptive possession of salmon fishings and foreshores may make good certain rights under the Law of Scotland, similar rights can be acquired by the public, in regard to trout fishing in public rivers; whether he is aware that upwards of a century ago the River Spey was held, by judicial decision of the Supreme Court of Scotland, affirmed by the House of Lords, to be a public river, and that the public have exercised the right of fishing therein for trout and other fish, not of the salmon kind, from time immemorial; whether his attention has been called to a judgment, pronounced on the 16th February by Lord Kyllachy, interdicting such fishing on the ground that the Spey is not a public river, whereby the public are deprived of a valuable right long held by prescription; whether he is aware that great difficulty

is likely to arise in appealing this question to the highest Courts in consequence of want of funds ; and whether, under these circumstances, Her Majesty's Government can take any steps to prevent the destruction of such public rights, or will support a measure framed with that object ?

**SIR W. PEARCE** (Plymouth) : Before the right hon. Gentleman answers the question, I would ask whether the action was not brought by a public servant ?

\***THE LORD ADVOCATE** (Mr. J. B. BALFOUR, Clackmannan, &c.) : The hon. Member who has just sat down will, perhaps, give me notice of his question. I am not aware of any authority for holding that a public right of trout fishing can be acquired by prescriptive possession in a Scotch river where it is not tidal, the public having no title to which the possession can be referred. It was decided, more than a century ago, that the upper heritors on the Spey had a right of floating rafts of timber down that river ; but it has not, in so far as I know, been determined by decision that the Spey, above the point to which the tide ascends, is public for the purpose of any question relative to fishing. I have no information as to whether the public have fished in the Spey for trout or other fish not of the salmon kind from time immemorial. I have seen the judgment of Lord Kyllachy, pronounced on February 16th, interdicting such fishing ; but, as it may be, and I am told probably will be, taken to review, it would be premature to consider whether the matter to which it relates should be dealt with by legislation.

#### THE WELSH SUSPENSORY BILL.

**MR. HENRY HOBHOUSE** (Wilts, Devizes) : I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether the Welsh Church Bill, now before the House, includes in its operation portions of several English dioceses, but excludes portions of several Welsh dioceses ; and, if so, whether he will state the names of those dioceses and the number of the parishes respectively included and excluded, with their aggregate population and the aggregate value of their livings ?

**MR. ASQUITH** : The geographical limits of the Bill include one benefice in the diocese of Chester, one in the diocese

of Lichfield, and 10 in the diocese of Hereford, which are situate wholly in Wales. There are two benefices in the diocese of Chester and 10 in the diocese of Hereford which are situate partly in England and partly in Wales. The only Welsh diocese, any part of which lies outside the geographical limits of the Bill, is that of St. Asaph, in which there are 14 benefices situate wholly in England and three benefices situate partly in England and partly in Wales. The detailed information asked for in the last part of the question cannot be conveniently given in an answer, but will be laid on the Table if the hon. Member will move for a Return.

**VISCOUNT CRANBORNE** (Rochester) : Does the right hon. Gentleman intend to introduce into his Bill an Amendment dealing with the parishes which are partly in England and partly in Wales ?

**MR. ASQUITH** : I should like the noble Lord to give notice of the Question.

#### SCOTCH COUNTY COUNCIL ELECTIONS

**MR. ANGUS SUTHERLAND** (Sutherland) : I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland whether his attention has been called to the inconvenience, at the recent County Council Elections in Scotland, arising out of the lateness of the date fixed by the Local Government Act for these elections, and the consequent inclemency of the weather ; whether he is aware that, in some outlying districts in the Highlands, owing to the state of the weather, these elections were carried out under circumstances of great difficulty and disadvantage to both officials and electors, while in one or two localities irregularities occurred from the same cause ; whether there are any insuperable difficulties in the way of holding the County Council elections in Scotland on the first Tuesday of November, as in the case of the municipal elections, or even in October, instead of on the first Tuesday of December as at present ; and whether, in proposing any amendment of "The Local Government (Scotland) Act, 1889," the Government will keep in view the desirability of fixing the date of the County Council elections in Scotland at a more suitable season than mid-winter as at present ?

**SIR G. TREVELYAN:** The difficulties attending the last elections for County Councils in the North of Scotland were brought to my notice at the time, and the alteration of their date in future is among the amendments to the Local Government of Scotland Act, which are now under consideration.

#### CONVICTS (EARLY RELEASE) IRELAND.

**MR. MACARTNEY (Antrim, S.):** Will the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary for Ireland give the following Return (No. 9) as an Unopposed Return :—

“Return of all Convicts who were granted an Early Release on licence or by absolute discharge, or whose sentences were reduced in Ireland, from the 21st day of August, 1892, to the 29th day of February, 1893; showing the dates of conviction, the sentence awarded, the crimes for which they were convicted, and the amount of the remission of sentence.”

\***MR. J. MORLEY:** Yes; the Return shall be given if the hon. Member will add to it similar statistics relating to the administration of the late Government.

#### THE ARMY ESTIMATES.

**MR. HANBURY (Preston):** I do not see the Secretary for War in his place, but perhaps the Secretary to the Treasury or the Chief Secretary for Ireland could tell me whether the Supplementary Army Estimates will be taken first on Thursday, or the ordinary Estimates?

**THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (MR. MARJORIBANKS, Berwickshire):** The Supplementary Estimates.

**MR. A. J. BALFOUR (Manchester, E.):** On what day is it proposed to take Vote 1 of the Army Estimates?

**MR. MARJORIBANKS:** On the same day.

**MR. A. J. BALFOUR:** Unless Vote 1 is put down as the first Order of the Day it will be impossible to discuss questions on the Question “That the Speaker do leave the Chair.”

#### ORDERS OF THE DAY.

##### SUPPLY—NAVY ESTIMATES.

SUPPLY—considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

76,700 men and boys for the Navy.

**THE SECRETARY TO THE ADMIRALTY (Sir U. KAY-SHUTTLEWORTH, Lancashire, Clitheroe):** Mr.

**Mellor,**—Before the Committee proceed to consider in detail the Estimates which it is my duty to bring before the House, I propose briefly to put before the Committee a few salient points. I have no desire to trouble the Committee with a long speech, but would rather confine the few observations I wish to make to a business-like statement. I would refer the Committee, if they desire a fuller statement on these points, or if they desire informations on other points which I may not think it necessary to dwell upon, to the statement circulated to Members of the House in the name of the First Lord of the Admiralty. I can also refer them to the Estimates themselves and to the programme which they contain for matters of detail to which I do not refer. As this is the first time that I have the honour to represent the Admiralty in the House of Commons, I think I may confidently appeal to the kindness of hon. Members and the readiness of the House to make reasonable allowances for one who has only been in Office six months, and who necessarily has to deal with a vast amount of detail that has been altogether new to him. I think I may at the outset take credit on behalf of the Board of Admiralty on one point—namely, that the Estimates have been in the hands of Members of the House at an earlier date than for many years past. When I first went to the Admiralty one of my earnest wishes was that the Estimates might be prepared in better time than they have been for years past, and I desire to thank not only in this, but in a great many other respects, the permanent officials at the Admiralty for the loyal, hearty, and able assistance they have rendered in preparing them. Now, I would first of all, with the permission of the Committee, deal with the question of numbers, which is the point immediately before the Committee in this Vote. There has been a continuous increase from year to year in the numbers proposed to this House. That increase affects the year in which it is proposed only partially, but it affects also the subsequent year. I will not trouble the House with many figures on the subject, but it is proposed that 76,700 men and boys should be voted for 1893–94; that is 2,600 in excess of the numbers voted last year, and 7,900 in excess of those voted

three years ago. I will mention what is the consequent annual increase of charge on Votes 1 and 2. The increase in those Votes in 1891 was £134,000, in 1892 nearly £186,000, and in the Estimates I am now proposing it will be nearly £146,000. It would be more but for a fact which has fortunately come to my rescue—namely, the fall in prices that has taken place during the past year. But for the fall in prices the increase on the Victualling and Clothing Vote would have been very much greater. In connection with the subject of the increase of numbers, I think I ought at once to refer to what was begun under the late Government and what is being now completed—namely, a thorough inquiry into the important question of the manning of the Fleet. The need for an increased number of men is obviously consequent on the increased number of ships under the Northbrook and Naval Defence Act programmes. In the summer of 1891 the difficulty of manning the ships as they were got ready for commission became acute. Consequently, the Admiralty appointed a very strong Manning Committee to consider the subject of manning the ships. It consisted of the First, Second, and Junior Naval Lords of the Admiralty, and two secretaries, of whose labours and the services they rendered I ought to speak in the highest terms. The objects of the Committee were manifold. They considered the needs of the 1894 Fleet, when the ships constructed under the Naval Defence Act were completed; and, first, what ships would constitute the War Fleet, and, secondly, whether the complements for the new ships needed revision. Action was at once taken. The complements were revised and brought up to date. The whole question of the manning of the ships had never before been considered. The complements of old sailing ships—and in this the hon. and gallant Gentleman opposite (Admiral Field) will bear me out—had been patched, and altered, and revised according to the needs or to the altered circumstances which had arisen with the introduction of steam, and other changes in the Fleet. But no regular inquiry had taken place as to what should be the complement of each individual ship. But after the inquiry which has taken place

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and the Report to the Board of Admiralty, every new complement of every ship in commission will be based on the Report of that Committee. I think the noble Lord opposite will be interested to know—if he does not know already—that this has been done within the last few days in the case of the new ship, the *Royal Arthur*, which was commissioned on March 2, and also in the case of the *Victoria*, which was re-commissioned and received a new crew on the same date. The complement of a ship will now be what an efficient Committee of great authority has judged to be necessary. The number of men needed for the Fleet of 1894 has been accurately ascertained. In order to carry out the arrangements it was necessary to increase the number of boys, at all events, for a time, and for the two years 1892-93 and 1893-94 the entry of boys has been raised up to 3,700 a year. It is calculated that the effect of that will be to more than cover the annual waste of the Fleet, and add considerably to the numbers in relation to the largely-increased number of ships. I have so far dealt mainly with the question of the War Fleet, but the needs of the Peace Fleet have also to be considered, and these have altered very remarkably. I do not know whether I need explain to the Committee the great change that has been introduced by the system of a Fleet Reserve. The large increase of ships in reserve rendered necessary the introduction of a new scheme for care and maintenance, and the ships are now put under the care of the Commander-in-Chief at each of the Home Ports as soon as completed. They are only put into the Reserve when they are quite complete, and skeleton crews are placed on board for their care and maintenance. One most important point in connection with these ships is that there should be a sufficient complement of men to keep the engines and the delicate machinery in perfect order. And the hon. Member for Lewisham (Mr. Penn) will be glad to hear that a proportionate addition of engine-room and artificer ratings is contemplated for such service. I may say, in passing, referring to the question which the hon. Member for Lewisham asked last night in respect to the Fleet at sea, that the number of engine-room artificers was very thoroughly considered,

and referred by the Manning Committee to an Engineer Committee, which was composed of some of the most experienced men. The result was a very elaborate Report, which stated the number of engine-room ratings necessary for each ship in the Navy. They went into the matter carefully, and one result of their Report is, no doubt, that the number of engine-room artificers told off to each particular ship may be somewhat reduced, but the number of chief stokers will be increased. I will not explain why it is felt necessary to increase the number of stokers in order to make provision for the care of the engines of the ships when at sea. That is a subject of detail on which, if the hon. Member for Lewisham desires further information, I shall be happy to give it. There is another part of the Report which I ought to refer to, and that is the increase of 500 in the number of Marines. The increase in the number of ships obviously necessitated an increase in the number of Marines. This increase, the Manning Committee advised the Admiralty, should go on for two years more, until we have a total of 16,000 Marines, which is the number the Manning Committee consider will be necessary for the Fleet in 1894. Now, I think I have, perhaps, said enough on the subject of numbers. Returning to the question of money, I should like to explain the actual amount which we are about to expend during the ensuing year. In spite of the increase to which I have just alluded in respect of numbers, and the consequent effect upon the Votes for Men and Clothing and other items, we are now able to propose practically the same amount of money as was estimated for last year by the noble Lord opposite. Although the sum is £25,000 more than the Estimates of 1891-2, it is nearly £38,000 less than the expenditure of that year, because the expenditure of 1891-2 considerably exceeded the Estimate. But this result—of Estimates practically equal to those of a year ago—has been brought about not by cutting down new construction, but by a careful examination of each Vote, and the inclusion only of what is necessary, in the opinion of the Admiralty, for the efficiency of the Navy. I will at once come to what I think the noble Lord opposite and other Members

of the House will be most anxious that I should dwell on—namely, the question of shipbuilding. I do not propose to enter upon details, because they will be dealt with on the Shipbuilding Vote. I recognise that it is usual to have a general discussion on Vote “A,” therefore I will deal generally with the question of shipbuilding. The question has been asked, What is the amount which should annually be spent on shipbuilding? Though I do not propose to advance any reply of my own to that question, I will quote the figures estimated by my predecessor. We have followed the example of our predecessors in printing an estimate of the depreciation of our ships. Last year the waste of depreciation of the Navy was put down at £2,060,000, but, taking into consideration the increase of the Fleet, that figure has now risen to £2,150,000. Last year the late First Lord estimated in his Statement that an expenditure of a “constant annual amount” of £2,350,000 was necessary to keep the Navy up to the proper level. The amount the present Board propose to spend on shipbuilding is just under £3,000,000.

MR. FORWOOD (Lancashire, Ormskirk): Does that include the armaments?

SIR U. KAY-SHUTTLEWORTH: No, it does not. It includes the expenditure for the year on contract ships under the Naval Defence Act. For the contract ships the expenditure is £538,000, for the dockyard ships under the Naval Defence Act it is £1,381,572, and for the further programme, £1,062,159—making a total, to give the exact figures, of £2,982,086. These figures cut the ground from under the feet of those who either anticipated a prompt check to shipbuilding, or thought that in proposing the same Estimates we should have to cut that part of them down heavily. Adding the armaments, the expenditure this year will be over £4,000,000. You must remember that there is a charge on the Consolidated Fund of £1,428,571, which extends over seven years under the Naval Defence Act for contract ships, and, therefore, the charge on the taxes during the present year for shipbuilding and armaments is upwards of £4,400,000. I do not think I need dwell any longer on these figures. I will at once come to a point to which the old Board of Admiralty and the



present Board of Admiralty equally attach great importance—namely, that when a ship is in hand—taking into consideration certain difficulties, and making a reservation with regard to them—it is desirable to complete her as rapidly as possible. We have had experience of the saving of money effected by the rapid completion of ships in two remarkable cases—that of the *Royal Sovereign*, in which the cost came under the estimate by over £32,000, and that of the *Hood*, where the saving is estimated at between £25,000 and £30,000. There are two great advantages besides economy in this rapid completion of certain ships. One of them is that we have ships immediately available in case of war. The *Royal Sovereign* and the *Hood* were available for war purposes at a much earlier date than would otherwise have been the case. There is another advantage of which we are now reaping the benefit—namely, that if you complete a ship, commission her, and send her to sea, you obtain valuable experience to guide you in designing future ships. There is another point to which the Admiralty attach great importance, and which is explained in the Statement issued by Lord Spencer—I refer to the re-construction of some of the older ships. The Admiralty are very much alive to the importance of what is called the second line of defence. For a second line some of the older ships are of great value if a certain amount of money is spent upon their re-construction. That point has not been left out of sight either by the present or the late Board of Admiralty. I pass on now to some points connected with construction, which are of considerable moment. One is the construction of a number of smaller ships remarkable for their great speed, and commonly called torpedo-boat destroyers. The Board have been enabled by the arrangements they have made in the course of the last few months to build six of these ships in three different private yards. As soon as these are completed, and we have the experience which will be gained from their trials, it is proposed to construct 14 more, making 20 in all. These will be built by contract. I pass on to what is perhaps the most important feature of the contract work proposed by the present Board of Admiralty. It will be seen

from the Estimates that it is proposed to build two great new cruisers. In the present Estimates only £57,500 are taken for each. The ships are to be called the *Powerful* and the *Terrible*, and their total cost will probably be over £700,000 each. They will be superior in speed, in coal capacity, in defence, and in armament to any cruisers that have been built or are building in any part of the world. Their construction has been forced upon the Admiralty by what is going on abroad. I do not think it is desirable that I should enter fully into this matter, but I may say the Admiralty have come to the conclusion that there is no part of our Programme of greater importance, or, indeed, more absolutely necessary for the defence of our great commerce than the construction of cruisers which will be superior to any existing in any part of the world. I may point out to the Committee that the possession by even a weak Power of cruisers more formidable than any possessed by ourselves might constitute a serious danger to British commerce. We may learn from the experience not of a weak Power but of a great Power—the United States in the case of the *Alabama*—what havoc a single cruiser can make in the commerce of a nation. It is thought by our advisers that there is nothing more important than that we should have cruisers surpassing in speed, coal-capacity, defence and armament, any cruiser that exists or is now building. So much for the contract work.

\***LORD G. HAMILTON** (Middlesex, Ealing): What are to be the dimensions of the new cruisers?

**SIR U. KAY-SHUTTLEWORTH:** I am not prepared to give the dimensions. The designs are not yet completed, and, even if they were, I should ask the noble Lord not to press me too much on the point, because I do not think it is desirable that these details should be given too soon. I have said generally that it is contemplated that the cruisers shall be superior to any which either are in existence or are building. Leaving contract ships and coming to the dock-yard work, it is proposed to build two battleships, which it was necessary to postpone last year, partly because of the hastening of the completion of the *Hood* and the *Empress of India*, and partly

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because of the necessity of getting on with the six torpedo-boat destroyers. These two battle-ships, three second-class cruisers, and two sloops, which are called in the Estimates "station gun-boats," and are meant for foreign stations, constitute our dockyard programme. The two battle-ships are to be on similar lines to the *Royal Sovereign*. We are, however, profiting by the experience we have gained in the design of the *Renown*, and are increasing the auxiliary or secondary armament, substituting 12-inch for 13·5-inch guns, giving casemate protection to part of the secondary armament, and providing much stronger defence. These great battle-ships are thought necessary to enable us to keep up with the ships which are building in other countries. It is considered that the new ships will constitute sufficient provision for the coming year in view of the completion of five or six Naval Defence Act battle-ships during the year.

LORD G. HAMILTON: What are to be the dimensions?

SIR U. KAY-SHUTTLEWORTH: I am not quite sure that it would be wise to give the dimensions because the designs are not yet quite complete, and I do not think it well that details should be given too early. The two ships will be larger than, and will cost rather more than the *Royal Sovereign*. The second-class cruisers will be called the *Talbot*, the *Eclipse*, and the *Minerva*. They will follow pretty closely while improving upon the *Astrea* cruisers of the late Government, and they are also designed to meet vessels which are being built abroad. I now come to the sloops, which are to be called the *Torch* and the *Alert*. They will have single screws and sails and are intended for foreign stations. An argument is sometimes used that we are going back a hundred years in resorting to sail power. In reply to that, I would mention that there is an immense advantage on certain of our stations, and particularly the Australian and Pacific stations, in having sail power for the purpose of saving coal. I will give an illustration. The *Daphne* was lately ordered to proceed from Esquimaux to Hong Kong. After she had passed Honolulu the nearest coaling station in the direction of Hong Kong was Yokohama, which was 3,600 miles distant. The vessel carries coal which is supposed to take her 3,400

miles, but a margin has to be added for contingencies, and probably a distance of 400 or 500 miles is the least that should be thus added. Under these circumstances she had to proceed by way of Fiji and the Torres Strait, a distance of 2,700 miles greater, although it was the hurricane season in the Pacific Islands, and she was likely to encounter dirty weather. The distance between Esquimaux and Hong Kong for a steamer with sail power is 7,560 miles, and for a full-power steamer, *viâ* Yokohama, 7,840 miles, whilst the distance which the *Daphne* had to traverse was 10,540 miles. The Board of Admiralty recognised the importance of bearing these points in mind, and we think it well under the circumstances to have these two sloops constructed with masts and full sail power. As to the policy of the present Board of Admiralty I may say generally that it is like that of former Boards of Admiralty, to keep the Navy in such a condition that it will be able to give a good account of the fleets of more than one foreign nation, and to maintain the command of the seas for the protection of our commerce. The Board are satisfied that for the year 1893-4 the commencement of two battle-ships and two great cruisers is the proper way of fully discharging that duty, and that two cruisers are a more urgent need than the addition of more than two to our exceptional strength in battleships. There is another advantage to be gained by building these two cruisers rather than four battle-ships—namely, that the cost will fit in far more conveniently with the expenditure of the year 1894-5. That is a point which the Board of Admiralty cannot overlook, although I merely mention it as one of secondary importance. The noble Lord opposite (Lord G. Hamilton) asked a question yesterday as to the cost of our new ships. Although I do not wish to be absolutely bound by the figure, I may say that approximately his estimate of £5,000,000 as the total cost of the new ships proposed, including the torpedo boat destroyers, is about right. Perhaps I ought to say a word on the programme generally. I do not desire at this moment to re-open the old controversy as to the Naval Defence Act. I think it is quite sufficient to guard myself and those with whom I have the honour to act by saying

that we on this side of the House are not enamoured of the policy of Acts of Parliament for these purposes. I will not enter into the objections, constitutional and administrative, which we entertain with regard to that system. We lay stress on the difference between a Naval Defence Act and a Naval Defence programme. I will admit at once that a programme is desirable. We are only proposing a programme for one year. But I will not conceal from the House that we have examined the effects of our programme on the year 1894-5. This is a new Government, however, and we prefer to restrict our public announcements, to a programme for one year, and in the long run that will be found the best course. This, however, I will say: that we fully recognize the value of continuity of policy in naval administration, and confidently claim that we have done nothing inconsistent with a broad and wise interpretation of that term, continuity. In that sense and in that spirit I commend these proposals to the kind consideration of the House.

Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That 76,700 men and boys be employed for the Sea and Coast Guard Services for the year ending on the 31st day of March 1894, including 15,005 Royal Marines."

\***LORD GEORGE HAMILTON** (Middlesex, Ealing) said: The right hon. Gentleman has given us a very fair statement as far as it goes, and when he asks for the consideration of the House, we, of course, are entitled to hear what he has to lay before us, and when, further, he tells us that his Government are acting in the direction of giving effect to the policy of the late Government, he may be confident that he will have the utmost consideration and support from this side of the House. But, Sir, notwithstanding the right hon. Gentleman's clear and lucid speech and the Memorandum of the First Lord of the Admiralty, the information placed before the Committee is not to be compared with that which in previous years has been presented. The right hon. Gentleman has made it clear that the Government propose a large increase in men and a reduction of expenditure. The increased cost of the extra men will amount to £145,000, and so it is we have the fact that the Admiralty are trying to carry

on an increased amount of work on an expenditure reduced by £145,000. When I was at the Admiralty I made a forecast of what the Estimates this year would be, and I calculated that, making every possible reduction, it would not be possible to provide the necessary services except by an increased expenditure of from £150,000 to £200,000 over the Estimates of last year. Therefore the present Estimates are, I hold, £200,000 short of what they ought to be. But it is impossible to eliminate from our consideration the discussion in regard to Navy matters which took place last night. The right hon. Gentleman appears to give great consideration to the appeals made by the Representatives of the Dockyard towns. But I would point out to him that what these gentlemen wanted was not consideration, but cash, and cash and consideration are not convertible terms, and anybody who pretends that he would favourably consider any proposal unless he had cash would not be very popular in the Dockyards. The late Government thought they did more for the Dockyards than any former Government; but the requests made by the Representatives amounted to an increase of £300,000 a year, and I say unhesitatingly that if the late Government had chosen to increase the Votes by that amount every Dockyard Member in the House of Commons now would be a Unionist. The right hon. Gentleman and his colleagues are in this position. These gentlemen who represent the Dockyards have made promises to their constituents, and right hon. Gentlemen must do something to satisfy them, otherwise they may lose their support, and the hon. Gentlemen may lose their seats. But how is this extra sum to be provided? The right hon. Gentleman only explained to us Votes which have not been cut down. The Ordnance Vote has been cut down by £83,000, and the Works Vote has been cut down by £68,000. I say unhesitatingly, from my knowledge of the requirements of these branches, that both of them ought to have been higher than they were last year, and it is only by delaying the commencement of necessary and urgent work, or by transferring a sum which ought to be in the Estimates from the Consolidated Fund, that the reduction can be made. In considering the Navy Estimates, it is

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always to be remembered that there are only three Votes which are compressible or expansible. We compressed two of these to the lowest possible point, and they will, I feel sure, have to be increased next year. With regard to Vote 8, which provides for men and material at the Dockyards, I would point out that we were last year completing our great naval programme, and as a ship approaches completion the nature of the expenditure changes. Well, now, the great bulk of the expenditure at the completion of a ship is on labour, while the great bulk at the commencement is, as the House will understand, on material. The Admiralty are now under the necessity of commencing a large new programme, and the main item of expenditure will be the provision of material. Therefore, that part of Vote 8 relating to material cannot be cut down, and the only other part is that for labour. The result of cutting down the Estimates by £200,000 and of making promises to the Dockyard Representatives is that, although we may improve the position of the dockyard men, we will have during the next few years very largely to reduce their number. I have no comment to make on that part of the Vote with regard to the increase in the number of men, but Lord Spencer in his Memorandum makes the following observation :—

“So long as the requirements of the nation for vessels of war continue as they are, it will be impossible to reduce the number of officers and men serving in the Fleet, and I am not prepared to suggest any change in this direction at the present time.”

Now that is a statement misleading both as regards the basis on which the increase is founded and as regards its conclusion. No First Lord of the Admiralty can hold out any hope either for the present or for the future of any reduction in the number of men voted for the Navy. The country has determined that the Navy is to be equal in force to the combined fleets of any two nations, and the inference that at some future time a reduction in the number of men is to be made is altogether erroneous.

SIR U. KAY-SHUTTLEWORTH: No inference like that suggested can be drawn from the words. Nothing of the kind was in the mind of my noble Friend.

LORD G. HAMILTON: I would refer the right hon. Gentleman to the

Memorandum itself. It says :—“I am not prepared to suggest any change in this direction,” and the Chancellor of the Exchequer has suggested the words “at the present time.” The Secretary to the Admiralty will agree that in order to give effect to the recommendations of Admiral Hoskins’s Committee a steady increase in the strength will be necessary for the next two or three years. The hon. Member for Lewisham (Mr. Penn) last evening criticised the policy of substituting a certain number of chief stokers for chief engine-room artificers. The justification is that every year, as education progresses, there are more men who can manage and drive engines, and it is fitting that some of the arduous work of the more highly paid men should be transferred to men of rather inferior position who are yet quite competent to discharge the duties so given to them. Last night various suggestions were also made as to the desirability of meeting the request of the warrant officers to be placed on the same footing with respect to commissions as that of warrant officers in the Army. There are difficulties in the way of granting that request. We recognised them last year; and were then asked that a rank should be given to them which would rank them as commissioned officers equivalent to that of chief officers in the Coastguard. One way to carry out this Policy was to increase the number of chief warrant officers and to find some new denomination for them. If the subject were taken in hand and a slight increase of pay were granted, the grievance could be removed in a manner which would be satisfactory to the men themselves and to all concerned. With the new construction programme I have little fault to find, but my figures do not quite agree with those of the right hon. Gentleman, for I calculate that the provision in this year’s Estimates is rather less than that in last year’s. There is an impression abroad that because the Naval Defence Act has been passed the equality of our fleet with the fleets of any other two nations has been achieved; but it has not yet been achieved and will not be until next year. In that year it will be necessary to consider carefully the condition of Foreign Navies and their ship-building programmes, and it may be found necessary to do something more than make good the wear and tear of the

existing British Fleet. The right hon. Gentleman said that he did not propose to embody his programme in an Act of Parliament. That I consider a mistake, because the only way by which a Government can give permanent effect to their wishes is by Statute. If the admitted wants of the Navy are not provided for in that way they may be disregarded at a future time and relegated to a second place by a Government anxious to meet financial exigencies, or they may be overlooked in some way. The objection to legislation like the Naval Defence Act chiefly came from the officials of the Treasury. Such legislation it would seem be contrary to their instincts and traditions. There is no department of State that wants reform so much as the Treasury. It is the most antiquated and unbusiness-like of all our institutions. The moment a common-sense proposal is made it is opposed by the Treasury, with its obsolete notions of financial administration. I venture to prophesy that unless the representatives of the Admiralty guard themselves by putting their proposals in an Act of Parliament it will be found impossible to give effect to them. The procedure of the right hon. Gentleman with respect to his programme is distinctly open to criticism, and it might be useful if we were to put in contrast the policy of the present and the late Governments with respect to the amount of information laid before the House. The Committee are asked to sanction the building of four very large ships, and no detailed information has been given respecting them. I have great belief in the genius of the head of the constructive department, Mr. White, and in the ability of the Naval Lords, but it is rather a strong order to ask the Committee to assent to so very large a programme without giving them more information. I estimate that the programme will cost £5,000,000. I suppose the two cruisers, which are to cost £700,000, are substitutes for two new battle-ships which it was proposed to build last year. I intended when in office to build three new battle ships. I had passed the designs of one, and had left the other two over for the financial year terminating April next. I assume that the two cruisers proposed to be built by the Government are in substitution for the two battle-ships I proposed to construct. It is a substitution

of two cruisers for two battle-ships. I dare say the right hon. Gentleman has good reasons for this course; but it must be recollected that if we ever get engaged in a really serious war, the command of the seas will really rest with that Power which has the most battle-ships and the most fighting power. The judiciousness of this substitution of cruisers for battle-ships, therefore, depends on the arms and armament of the cruisers, and it is difficult for us, without information as to the size and equipment of these cruisers, to decide whether or not this is a proper course. I suppose they are to be faster and better armed than the Russian war vessel which is described as the largest and most heavily armed now afloat. I suppose the clear tonnage will be 13,000 tons.

SIR U. KAY-SHUTTLEWORTH: I am not in a position to give the details in respect to the cruisers just now.

LORD G. HAMILTON: I think the right hon. Gentleman puts rather a high test on the confidence of the House. When will the right hon. Gentleman have full details of these vessels? I think we must insist on them. Last year I undertook to lay the designs of the vessels before Parliament before any money was spent on these vessels. I think the House has a right to this information. There is a very important question at stake which is the distribution of the guns on board the vessels. These vessels are more heavily armed, and, therefore, comes in the most important question, how are the guns to be distributed. At present we have a disposition of the guns on board these vessels which we believe to be most effective. The great thing is to be able to work the guns above without interfering with the guns below. I attach great importance to the fact that the guns may be fired independently of each other, because in the heat of action it is impossible to have concerted action in the firing of the guns, and what happens is that one gun goes off and then another. I must, therefore, urge the right hon. Gentleman, without wishing to embarrass or impede the Admiralty in any way, to give full details of these vessels—the dimensions, armour, and armament, as well as the cost—before we are asked to assent to what is undoubtedly a departure from the existing practice. I only want an approximate estimate. I do not know whether the

Government realise the great change which has taken place in Naval policy since we were in office. We need to work to a standard, and it is impossible to work to that standard unless you make out in advance the exact sum that is to be spent year by year. I cannot help thinking that in the course of procedure which they have adopted the Government next year will find themselves in a difficulty, because of the encroachments that have been made on money appropriated by Act of Parliament to new construction, and which will prevent the completion of the new ships as soon as has been promised. As regards the distribution of work, I am not quite satisfied with the distribution between the dockyards and the private yards. I think it likely to lead to great reduction in dockyard labour, because while the expenditure for material goes up the expenditure for labour goes down. The Admiralty will find great difficulty in providing material for the employment of the necessary dockyard hands. The larger the ship the smaller the proportion of the expenditure which goes to labour, and the smaller the ship the larger the proportion of the expenditure that goes to labour. For instance, in the case of the *Royal Sovereign*, the tonnage of which was upwards of 14,000 tons, the cost of material was £388,000, and the cost of labour £190,000. Therefore, for every £1 spent on material there was only 10s. spent on labour. On the other hand, in the case of the *Edgar*, of 7,300 tons, the cost of material was £95,000, and the cost of labour £134,000, which gave £1 to material for £1 8s. to labour. In the case of the *Circe*, of only 830 tons, an expenditure on material of £9,000 afforded occupation for £20,000 worth of labour, which gave £1 to material for £2 1s. to labour. The Government now proposed to put the whole of the torpedo destroyers, 20 in number, out to contract. A better distribution would be to retain a certain number of these vessels for dockyard work. The dockyards would be able to build the engines and boilers of these vessels, and in this way labour in the dockyards would be employed more efficiently than can be done under the proposed allocation of the work. Then, neither the right hon. Gentleman nor Earl Spencer has given us any informa-

tion as to the class of armour-plate to be used in these new vessels. Experiments in armour-plate have been rapidly developed during the last year, and there is now no doubt that certain American patents with respect to these plates have been very successful. I would like to know whether the Admiralty propose to protect these new vessels with that type of armour, and, if not, with what type of armour? I wish also to point out that the boilers in these vessels have given a great amount of trouble, and I hope the Admiralty will bear in mind that there should be a large margin of boiler power in vessels destined for high speed. I now turn to the Ordnance Vote, and I find that the amount of money ordered to be spent under the Naval Defence Act, £600,000, has been cut down to £450,000. I do not know on what grounds that has been done, and it seems to me an infraction of the principle of the Naval Defence Act. The great object of that Act was that ships when built should have not only guns, but a reserve of ammunition and stores. Taking into consideration that there was a small reserve for contract-built ships, I, when in Office, after full consideration with my advisers, fixed the amount of the reserve for dockyard-built ships at £2,500,000, as the amount which must be appropriated to the armament of these vessels. That was a reduced amount, but the Admiralty have cut it down by £150,000. I want to know is it proposed to transfer the sum to the Consolidated Fund?

SIR U. KAY-SHUTTLEWORTH: I am assured, by the same authorities who advised the noble Lord, that no ship that is to be completed will be completed without its guns; but, as certain of the ships are not to be completed within the time contemplated by the Naval Defence Act, so, also, their armament was not required so soon. I can assure the noble Lord that there is no depletion contemplated in reserves of armaments.

LORD G. HAMILTON: I knew what amounts were necessary six months ago, and I cannot tell how the remarkable change has been brought about. However, I will raise the question on Vote 9, and then the right hon. Gentleman may be in a position to answer. I think the inevitable result will be that next year the Armament Vote will go up, and if the Vote for material goes up also,

it is clear that next year you will be in great financial difficulties. The same observation applies to the Works Vote. I calculated that the Works Vote would go up by £20,000 this year, instead of which it has gone down £68,000. I see that some very pressing matters have been postponed. The Gibraltar Mole and the Naval Barracks at Portsmouth have disappeared from the Vote. These were large works that were contemplated. My general criticism upon the Vote is that, while certain works have been completed, an insufficient number of new works have been proceeded with, which will undoubtedly result, in years to come, in a large increase of expenditure. But the most important reduction in the Estimates is that by which the subsidy to the merchant cruisers was reduced from £60,000 to £22,000.

**SIR U. KAY-SHUTTLEWORTH :** That is only in consequence of a decision to keep one year's amount in hand.

**LORD G. HAMILTON :** This is a very important point, and one in which the House takes a great interest. The late Government introduced a plan by which the steamers of the Peninsular and Oriental and the great Atlantic liners were subsidized for the conveyance of troops, on the shortest notice, at a fixed rate, and whenever the Admiralty chose. The great merit of the scheme is that if we became involved in any large Naval war operations the whole resources of these Companies would be at our disposal. It is difficult to over-estimate the value of that plan, and I wish to know whether the Government propose to continue it.

**SIR U. KAY-SHUTTLEWORTH :** The policy will be continued in the present year.

**LORD G. HAMILTON :** Do I understand that the intention is to change the policy ?

**SIR U. KAY-SHUTTLEWORTH :** The subject will be further considered, but for the present it is proposed to continue the system.

**LORD G. HAMILTON :** I know what the words "farther considered" means. I may take them as a warning, and I wish now to utter my protest against any interference with the plan. The subsisting system has the additional advantage of encouraging the employ-

ment of British seamen on board of the subsidized liners, and it sets an example for others to follow in this respect. I was astonished to find that one-third of the number of petty officers in the Mercantile Marine were foreigners. So in drawing the contracts with the companies a clause was inserted subjecting them to a penalty unless they carried a certain number of Naval Reserve men on board. I hope nothing will be done to interfere with the efficiency and scope of that policy, for it is one on which I and my friends feel strongly. There is only one other matter of importance to which I would like to call the attention of the Committee. When in office it was my duty to make myself acquainted with the opinion of foreign experts as to the condition of our sea-going fleet, and I think I may say that they have a high opinion of its efficiency and organisation. The improvement during the last six or seven years has been very remarkable. But there is one point in our defence to which I desire to call particular attention, and about which these experts are not so enthusiastic, and that is, the parts the Army and the Navy are to take in it. Every country except our own entrusts to the Navy and not to the Army the defence of great Naval ports and stations. In every one of these countries the Army is the first line of defence; but here, where the Navy is the first line of defence, we reverse the policy. The present system of coast defence is wrong, and every year the work connected with that defence is becoming more marine and more aquatic in its character. Writing to the United States Government in June, 1888, Lieutenant Colwell said—

"The coast defence of Great Britain is notably the most inefficient of any of the great European Powers, owing to the divided control, lack of co-operation, absence of digested schemes for mutual support, and the mixing of Naval and Military duties. The defence is unwieldy in its administration, unprepared for sudden work, and labours under the disadvantage of placing Military men outside their legitimate sphere of work."

To entrust our coast defence to the Army is a wrong system, and the longer it is in the hands of the Army the more difficult it will be to work it. Holding these views, I am very anxious that, if the House wishes it, nothing should be done by either the Admiralty or the War Office

to impede the gradual transfer of the defence of Naval ports and stations from the Army to the Navy. If it was ever proposed to arm the Army or Navy with obsolete weapons there is not a man in this House who would not protest against placing them upon such unequal conditions. In my judgment, an obsolete system of organisation is as bad or even worse than an obsolete system of arms. Obsolete arms can easily be replaced, but an obsolete system of organisation eats into the very roots of the country's resources, and cannot be altered at a moment's notice, and in a time of emergency and danger. Let the Committee for a moment consider under what conditions alone the stationary defence by the Naval force can be tested. It cannot be tested except under circumstances of adversity. It is only so long as our Navy is supreme in her command of the sea that no serious attack can take place; it is only when it is demoralised at sea that the conditions under which it would be necessary to work a mixed system of this kind could be tested. And I hold very strongly that we ought to look at this question from one point of view alone—which of the two services is best to undertake the work, and if it is decided that the Navy, and the Navy alone, can adequately undertake that work, I think that gradually there should be transferred to them the men, materials, and money necessary to enable them to perform the duty which their training, service, and experience specially qualify them to undertake. I admit it might result in a very considerable difference between the dimensions of the two services, and entail a considerable transfer of money from the Army to the Navy Votes. It is the only sphere of action where two services overlap; and if this question is discussed and considered the almost unanimous opinion of those who have gone into it would be that the change I have pointed out would be one that should be gradually undertaken upon the decision of the House. I apologise to the Committee for having spoken at such considerable length, and I will sum up what I have said in one or two sentences. The proposals with regard to the men are satisfactory, and also the new Shipbuilding Vote, as far as money is concerned. We are short, however, of information, and

we must have that before these vessels are built. The work to be done, in my judgment, is insufficient, but even if it be insufficient, and the Admiralty have those demands pressed upon them that were made last night, it is essential if they wish to give effect to the programme which they have laid before the Committee, that they should try and adopt our dockyard procedure and pass an Act of Parliament. I am perfectly satisfied that unless they do so they will find they will be unable to hold their own against the financial exigencies of the Treasury or against personal or political pressure from Members representing dockyard constituencies. On the other hand, if they will follow our procedure, all they will have to do will be to admit they have made a mistake, and they have often done that in other matters, and they will meet with almost unanimous support on this side of the House. Having got the assent of the House to this Shipbuilding Vote, and the House having declared this shipbuilding programme is to be completed in a certain time, they will be in an impregnable position, and they would find that they would be able to defy alike the pressure of the Treasury and their friends, and bring to a rapid and effective realisation the large shipbuilding proposals they have placed before us.

\*MR. ARNOLD-FORSTER (Belfast, W.) did not desire to speak upon technical matters, but there were one or two questions which seemed to him essential for the Committee to take into account with the distinct object of making a change. The noble Lord who had just sat down had given him a good introduction to the matter he wished to call attention to in the suggestion for further employment of the Royal Marines. He was not aware whether the Committee realised what a large proportion of their Naval forces the Royal Marines at present constituted. The number of men had been increased, and was now no less than 14,500, out of a total of 71,000 combatants in the Naval and Marine Service, and would shortly be 16,000. They had in their possession a force of soldiers absolutely without rival, and yet at this moment they were acting in a manner calculated to deprive that body of men of the services of the most competent officers; they were at



present handicapping the Royal Marines by a system they adopted of non-employment of the officers. Physically the Royal Marines was one of the finest corps they had, and only last year the recruiting standard went up to 5 ft. 10 in., but they laboured under one very great disadvantage. Every one knew that so far as the men were concerned they were not only treated well, but they found no difficulty in obtaining employment on leaving the service; but the officers laboured under very great disadvantages. He had been making an examination of the chances of employment for the officers, and he found that the chance of employment on active service was only one—namely, that of Deputy Adjutant General, whose active service immediately relegated him to a stool in an office in Whitehall. The first condition of his being placed upon the active list, was that he should become inactive. In the Army, however, he found there were on the active list 188 Generals, and in the Navy there were 21 "Flag" officers actively employed; therefore, the chances held out to the Royal Marine officer was out of all proportion inferior to those in the Army or Navy, whichever basis they took it upon. The chances offered to the Royal Marine Officers ought to be at least six times what they were. He did not wish to say anything discourteous, but the obvious conclusion to be drawn was that they were not likely to get the exact class of men they ought to get when they narrowed the field of promotion. They could not and must not expect to get the best work from any class of men if they did not give them a reasonable chance of promotion. A remedy for this state of things was easy. What was wanted was to give a wider sphere of responsibility and employment to the officers of the Royal Marines. At present the only posts open to officers in this branch of the Service who had succeeded in their career was that of Commandant at Portsmouth, Chatham, and Devonport, and the post he had referred to at Whitehall. They wanted a wider field, and what he would suggest was that the Commandant's post should be extended, and there was ample opportunity in various parts of the world. They had coaling stations, which were what he might call amphibious positions which required to be manned by men accus-

tomed to the sea and acquainted with the working of navy guns. For these stations they required men who could be easily transferred by our ships from one point to another; there were points that might become threatened which would require the assistance of men who could be rapidly moved without liability to the disadvantages of sea sickness, and the disorganisation that attended the embarkation of troops; men who could be moved without throwing out of gear the whole Army organisation. What they wanted was a force that could easily be transferred from one place to another and made effective at whatever place it was sent to. Such a force existed to their hands in the Royal Marines. He did not propose to discuss the details of this question as they had been discussed at great length and with great ability elsewhere, but they must not forget that the Royal Marines happened to be a service that did fall somewhat between two stools, and did not receive the amount of encouragement and approval that they should receive, either at the Admiralty or the War Office. This was a grievance which was making men discontented, and he thought it was a matter that the Committee might very well press upon the attention of the Board of Admiralty. There was one other matter he would like to call attention to. A document had recently been brought before the attention of the Admiralty which was the result of a statement made by a large number of officers in Her Majesty's ships sailing in foreign waters. One of the matters in this document affected the personal comfort of the officers, and should receive some consideration. It was a well-known fact that officers in the Army received a large amount of leave on return from foreign service, as a matter of right. In the Navy the leave given was six weeks, and after that time the officer was on half-pay, which meant in the case of a lieutenant that he received about 2s. a day less than was received by the compositors who set up the Parliamentary Papers they read day by day. The conditions of sea-life were also very different to those in the Army, where an officer carried about with him all his paraphernalia, and was frequently accompanied by his wife, and therefore he did not think

he was going too far in commending this matter to the representatives of the Admiralty, and urging that something should be done to put the officers of the Royal Navy on something approaching an equality with officers in the Army. Before sitting down there was just one other matter that he should like to call attention to it, and it arose out of the speech of the noble Lord (Lord G. Hamilton). It was proposed by the Admiralty to build a large number of extra torpedo boats. He did not know what provision was made for the manning of them, but under the present circumstances whenever the torpedo boats were called out the greatest difficulty was found in manning them. What happened was that when the best men were called away from the sea-going ships, the best artificers were taken from the engine-room, and the best officers were taken from the ward-room in order that the boats might be sent to sea. These officers and men were put into boats with which they had no acquaintance, a most wasteful process, and a process which no captain who had ever been in command of a ship would recommend. In that connection he would suggest the propriety of utilising what was ready to their hand at this moment. They had lying up at Devonport, Portsmouth, and Chatham some four score of what were called first-class torpedo boats, which were only taken out once a year. The boats were of no real use where they were, and as they had all round the coast an incomparable force in their yachtsmen and crews, who knew the territorial waters fifty times better than the majority of officers in the Navy could, he would suggest that these boats should be handed over to some properly-constituted volunteer force that would be responsible for providing crews, and who would undertake to be responsible for housing, and for any damage to the boats. He believed that in this way an excellent force would be given to the Navy.

\*ADMIRAL FIELD (Sussex, Eastbourne) said he was in a great difficulty. He gave notice of a special character regarding the Admiralty Minute with reference to the *Howe* court-martial, and he sat for five hours last night desiring to bring the question forward. Now, he had heard some rumours that if he tried to bring it on he would be stopped, and,

therefore, he wished to ask whether he could raise the question of the Admiralty Minute upon this Vote.

\*THE CHAIRMAN (Mr. MELLOR, York, W.R., Sowerby) : I think it would probably come either under the Admiralty Vote or the Vote for Martial Law.

MR. HANBURY (Preston) : On a point of order, Sir, I wish to ask a question. We have been discussing the Shipbuilding and Admiralty Vote on this Vote, and it is treated as a general discussion. May I ask what distinction you draw between the Shipbuilding Vote and the Admiralty Vote ?

THE CHAIRMAN : The distinction is this : on the first Vote of the Navy Estimates it is usual for a general discussion to take place, which is opened by the Secretary to the Admiralty. It is not competent on that to go into matters of detail, or any special matter that does not concern the Vote itself. With regard to the Shipbuilding Vote, the noble Lord (Lord George Hamilton) confined himself to discussing that generally and not on any particular details.

\*LORD GEORGE HAMILTON : Might I, on a point of Order, point out that we are discussing a Vote in which is included Admiral Fairfax and the other officers whose conduct my hon. Friend desires to call attention to.

\*THE CHAIRMAN : No, it is not the action of those officers to which the hon. and gallant Gentleman wishes to draw attention, but to the Admiralty Note.

\*ADMIRAL FIELD said he bowed to the decision without further question, though it was a little troublesome, after having prepared one's mind for a particular subject, to have to throw all that on one side, and take up another question. However, he would do his best. Let him say, speaking for himself and his brother officers, they heartily congratulated the right hon. Gentleman (Sir U. Kay-Shuttleworth) upon the new honour conferred upon him, and they thanked him for the manner in which he had introduced these Estimates. He could assure the right hon. Gentleman a warm support from naval men, but he should like to ask why the right hon. Gentleman had parted with the only naval man on the opposite side who might have assisted him ; instead of letting him (Mr. R. Duff) go to the Admiralty they

had sent him to New South Wales, so that the Admiralty was left with a poor landsman without any professional assistance. There was another hon. Gentleman who ought to have been sitting on the Treasury Bench, the hon. Member for Cardiff (Sir E. J. Reed). That hon. Member knew a great deal about naval matters, and he should like to ask why the Government had not obtained his services. He did not know whether they had broken their alliance with him, but he offered the Government his sincere condolence for not having the hon. Gentleman to explain difficult questions. He would now say a word with reference to the suggestions of his hon. Friend opposite (Mr. Arnold-Forster). The Navy thoroughly understood the object of his hon. Friend, and fully recognised the valuable services he had rendered the Navy in former years. The hon. Member touched on the question of the employment of the officers of the Royal Marines. Every naval officer would go with him and beyond him, if that were possible, on the question. Though a limited number, they were most valuable in time of war, and in times of peace he thought it would be most advantageous to employ them at the various coaling stations. The noble Lord (Lord George Hamilton) promised to try the experiment at the Falkland Island coaling station, and he would like to know if that had been carried out. The right hon. Gentleman shook his head, but he believed that if it were tried it would turn out to be a very great success. The noble Lord raised a very important and grave question about the dual control in various naval ports. Of course, theoretically, the Navy quite endorsed his views. The noble Lord said this should be carried out gradually. It would take a long time to carry it out, for they had neither officers, nor men, nor forces adequate for such a thing, and before it could be carried out effectually there would have to be a very large increase in the Navy and the Marines. There was, however, no difficulty in garrisoning the distant coaling stations. He came now to the statement of the First Lord of the Admiralty, and it was to a certain extent gratifying to naval men that there had been no attempt to cut down the expenditure and minimise the policy initiated by the noble Lord (Lord George

*Admiral Field*

Hamilton and his Board in 1888. But looking at the statement as a whole, it seemed to him an apologetic kind of statement. It appeared to have been drawn up with great caution, and with a view to gratify certain supporters of the Government. There was an apology for the increase in the number of men shown in the Estimates. The statement ran something like this: "That the cost of the medical attendance had increased correspondingly with the increase in the number of men, and we apologise for it." Were they ashamed of this increase? The Government proposed to increase the *personnel* of the Navy by 2,600 men; but, as far as he could make out, there was to be no increase in the number of the boys. He took it there was to be an increase of 2,600 men, including 500 Marines. Was that so, or were there boys? The feeling was that they ought to have at least 2,000 more men for the Marines; 500 more was not a number nearly sufficient, and this branch of the Service should be brought up to a strength of 20,000 men. He believed the Government were leaning too much on the Royal Naval Reserve, which ought not to be looked upon as a force to compose the first line they sent out to meet the enemy. These, however, were matters of detail which the House could not possibly be competent to deal with. He was grateful that they had appointed a Manning Committee to whose knowledge these questions could be referred, and whom they could rely upon to give a wise decision. The only doubt he had was whether the Executive would carry out their recommendations.

SIR U. KAY-SHUTTLEWORTH: I can re-assure my hon. and gallant Friend; they are carrying out all the recommendations of the Manning Committee.

ADMIRAL FIELD was glad to hear it. He was glad to see that the Admiralty were proposing a new kind of armament for the *Renown*. He also found in the new ship it was proposed to introduce a new kind of gun, and he was glad to notice that a new quick-firing gun was being introduced. He complained that little or no information was given as to the number of guns in reserve, and in process of manufacture. Last year the First Lord of the Admiralty gave full information on these points, but this

year, they had no such particulars for their guidance. He should like to ask the Secretary for the Admiralty for some information about public works. The statement intimated that arrangements were being made for rapid coaling at certain ports, but nothing was said as to the new dock at Gibraltar. Naval men had been pressing this question upon the late Government, as they recognised a new dock at Gibraltar was necessary. He should like to know whether the Admiralty had taken any steps in the matter. We should not give up that point. He saw no mention of the *Repulse*. What had become of her? Were they ashamed of her? She was a very fine ship, and was certainly worth mentioning. As to the Royal Naval Reserve, there was no information about the number the Reserve was to consist of, although last year they were told it was to be raised to 27,000. The late Lord of the Admiralty (Lord George Hamilton) started the policy of inducing promising young officers in the Mercantile Marine to enrol themselves and receive 12 months' training. Now, a mercantile officer, unless he were trained for a time on board a man-of-war, would be practically useless, and it was quite right for the late Lord of the Admiralty to give them facilities for being trained. But what was said in the first paragraph of the present First Lord's statement on this subject?

"It has not been possible, for financial and other reasons, to accept all the candidates who offered themselves."

"For financial and other reasons!" He did not admit that was a sufficient reason. Were they to depend on financial reasons for an officer being trained or untrained? They might have war breaking upon them, and were they to be told that these young men had not been trained for financial reasons? The cost was, comparatively speaking, so small that the objection was not worthy of notice. If they insisted on economising, for mercy's sake, do not economise on the training of officers, and 12 months' time was a short enough period for such training. Another paragraph which he had noted with displeasure was that one which stated that the system of training of the Second Class Reserve men was going to be changed, and that, instead of taking their drill annually as heretofore,

they were going to be put on board a man-of-war and take their training for a month once every five years. One month's training in five years was absolutely useless, for in such a long interval they would have forgotten all they had previously learned. Three years should be the minimum. He was pleased to note that a little money was to be spent on clothing the Naval Reserve men in a proper uniform. The Secretary to the Admiralty stated that it was the desire of the Government to maintain the position taken up by the late Government, namely, that the Navy of England should be on a par with any combination of any two Powers. But the Government were departing from that policy now. He was credibly informed that the Admiralty already ought to be increasing their shipbuilding, because other nations had already increased theirs—since this policy was inaugurated by the late Government in the Naval Defence Act. France and Russia had built or were about to build new ships. France was going to build 10 additional armour-clads, and Russia eight, making 18, so that we should want 18 more ships according to that to maintain the standard. Then France and Russia were making, or were going to make, additions to various other classes of vessels, so that if the Admiralty really intended to carry out the policy they had stated they were desirous of carrying out they would have to make many additions to the Navy. One word as to the standard of comparison, namely, that the Navy of England should be on a par with any combination of any two Powers. Naval men accepted that as a minimum and not as the standard. The standard they considered should alone be regarded was one which should be according to the measure of the work to be done. He had in his hand a letter from the distinguished Admiral of the Fleet, Sir Geoffrey Horby, who said—

"Personally I have never assented to the measure of the force assumed by the Admiralty, namely, that it should be equal to that of two foreign nations. It should depend first, on the tonnage of the Mercantile Marine which it has to protect, and then on the degree to which that marine is spread over the globe."

Yes, but the Admiralty had never studied that particular question, but they had fixed as their standard what might have been suitable in Nelson's time, namely,

double the force of any foreign Power against whom the Navy might have to fight. The position of the problem, however, had changed since Nelson's time. Allusion had been made to the mercantile cruisers. He had seen with much concern that the Inman Line, to whom the Government had been paying £15,000 per ship, had now been converted into a company called, he believed, the International Line running from America to Southampton. We had lost these ships, and paid our money for practically nothing. The Admiralty ought to consider this question anew. There ought to be something more than a mere holding of 12 months' money in hand, and there ought to be some penalty attached to a breach of the arrangement between the Admiralty and mercantile firms, otherwise what was to prevent firms receiving our money and then selling their ships? It was not of much practical use to have merely an honourable understanding on such a matter, and he suggested to the Admiralty there should be a hard-and-fast agreement, with penalties attaching to a breach of the same. He asked for some assurance that the training squadron was not to be done away with; most naval men were holding that, in these times at all events, it would be premature to adopt such a course. He now came to a few grievances. They had heard the Members from the five dockyard seats trying their level best to ventilate the grievances of the dockyard *employés* and to carry out the promises they had made, and by which they had won these seats. For his part he would much rather these seats should be lost to the Unionist Party than that the late Government should have done what they knew to be wrong in the management in the great dockyards. He believed the policy the late Government initiated in the dockyards was the best possible for the Service, and the good of the Service ought to be the only consideration that ought to weigh. He contended that the system of classification at the dockyards was the very essence of their successful administration; the whole Navy was based upon it, and it was the only successful policy to adopt in the administration of a great Department. He hoped, therefore, that this system of classification would be con-

*Admiral Field*

tinued. It should be remembered that the Fleet did not exist for the dockyards, but the dockyards for the Fleet, and the grievances of the seamen and officers were entitled to some consideration. He endorsed what had been said about creating a new rank for warrant officers. There should be a new rank created for meeting the aspirations of this deserving body of men. They had fleet surgeons and fleet engineers, and why not have fleet gunners, fleet boatswains, and fleet carpenters? That was a small thing to ask for, and surely it was worth while to meet that claim and make these men contented and happy. There was not a more loyal body of men under the Crown. He also endorsed what had been said as to considering the grievances of the chief petty officers which he thought ought to be considered and remedied. There were grievances which were scarcely, if at all, touched upon by the noble Lord. The coastguardsmen suffered under grievances for the last 10 years. He (Admiral Field) pressed them on the attention of the Members of the existing Government in 1886, and he had continued to mention the matter since then. The coastguardsmen held very strong views about the indifference with which they were being treated. It was most unfair to allow this difference to continue between one section of men-of-war's-men and another section—for they were all men of war, and, although the coastguards might not be in active service, they were quite as active as the others. The great grievance was in the matter of payment, and it ought to be remedied without delay. There were other grievances, but he would not go into detail on the points involved. He had had a conversation with an officer in the higher ranks of the Service, who admitted to him that these grievances existed, and said they ought to be remedied; but the blessed Treasury always stepped in the way of a remedy. He had left the case of the officers to the last, because he thought the case of the men ought to be considered first. They had a body of lieutenants who had very little hope of promotion. It was heart-breaking to ask these men to give their services, and, as the numbers were greatly in excess, something should be done to assuage their feelings on the score of promotion. This

grievance was a very great one, and he believed not half enough had been said about it. It was well known that a lieutenant coming home after an absence of four years, and paying off, had been ordered off again without any consideration. He did not see how they could get the present state of things remedied except through the House, as they could get no satisfaction from the heads of Departments. Would the right hon. Gentleman make a note of it? The lieutenants undoubtedly felt very sore about the matter of leave of absence and the matter of appointments. The matter of leave of absence, as a general principle, should be carried out in a regular and proper way. In a time of war everyone must go; but in a time of peace these officers should be allowed some time to see their friends, and they should even be allowed to marry, another privilege of which they were at present deprived. Another thing was that it was now no longer necessary to keep ships for lengthened periods on foreign stations. The feeling generally was that two years should be the maximum. Three or four years was a very long time to be away, and there was no reason why, in these days of steam and telegraph, there should not be more frequent changes — exchanges, perhaps, he should say — of our vessels from the Mediterranean to China, and another from China to the Mediterranean. The maximum term of service in such cases in the French Navy was two years, and he did not see that they should not adopt that period in England. Anything, indeed, that would bring contentment to a service upon which the Empire depended for its very existence merited the attention of the Government. He wished to know whether the gunnery school started at Sheerness had its full complement of men and appliances and was working efficiently. Another thing was the statement in the Memorandum that the *Sultan* would be completed in 1894. He did not blame the present Government for the delay. The noble Lord (Lord G. Hamilton) and his friends on that (the Conservative) side of the House were largely, if not wholly, responsible. But he thought they ought to make an effort to turn out the *Sultan* to take the place of the *Hove*. He found that right hon. Gentlemen were proud of the rapidity with which the *Royal Sovereign*

was completed and put in commission. The period was two years and eight months. Surely, if that were so, the *Sultan* ought to be available within a period of 12 months? They began last year and they ought to have the work finished this year. He would not trouble the House by going into other matters as he simply rose to speak on one subject. He hoped the matters which had been mentioned would have the attention of the right hon. Gentleman and his colleagues in the Government. He had no doubt that if proper attention were given to them contentment would be restored to the Service. So little was required, and that little would so help to remove the unpleasant feeling that existed, that he could not but expect that the Government would yield to the request put forward by the Service and by its friends in that House.

\*SIR U. KAY-SHUTTLEWORTH: I will not attempt to follow at any length the genial speech which the hon. and gallant Gentleman has just delivered. He is our only Admiral, and any remarks or suggestions he addresses to the House are sure to be listened to with respect and attention. I cannot follow the hon. and gallant Gentleman into all details, but I would like to say that, while he told us that this point and that had not been attended to, those are the very points which have received the most careful attention of the Admiralty. Now, with regard to the men, the coast-guards and their officers, the Admiralty will take care to bear in mind the friendly suggestions of my hon. and gallant Friend. The reconstruction of the *Sultan* will be completed in 1894 or 1895. It could not be much sooner, for the work has only just commenced. The comments which have been passed upon the conclusions arrived at by the Manning Committee will also be carefully considered. I have to thank the noble Lord opposite for the friendly tone of his remarks. The noble Lord seems to think that we are doing an increased amount of work on a reduced sum of money, and he referred to the Armament Vote, but the reduction on the expenditure of this year is really very small.

LORD GEORGE HAMILTON: I quoted the figures, and they are large enough.

**SIR U. KAY-SHUTTLEWORTH :** The Armament Vote of last year proved to be unnecessarily large, by a sum of at least £80,000, and the present Board of Admiralty had this to guide them. The noble Lord also inquired about the saving of £442,000 on the armament of the Dockyard ships, under the Naval Defence Act. There was a reduction in the original Estimate in respect of ammunition, due to a decision of the late Board in 1890, that the proportion of reserves of ammunition for the Fleet was too high. If we were to maintain this reserve, in accordance with the original Estimate given in the Naval Defence Act, we should be landed in considerable rejections of obsolete ammunition. Again, there is a saving of about £138,000 owing to the cost of stores manufactured in Government factories, and also in private trade, being cheaper than originally estimated. As an instance, I may mention that the 6-in. quick-firing brass case has come down in price by one-half. Nothing has been done, in the direction of cutting down the Estimate for armaments, which will endanger the absolute efficiency of our ships. No ship is to be without her guns. The noble Lord said the Works Vote should be higher. But he cannot point to any work of importance which has been left out. We are going on with the Gibraltar Mole, and we propose to spend £5,000 during the year upon it. We have no intention of shirking expenditure upon the barracks at Portsmouth. Sooner or later something will have to be done there, but I may say that there is a prospect that we shall be able to turn the convict prison at Portsmouth to account. Hence the delay. Attention has been called to the coaling station at Devonport. We have been advised not to proceed with this until we have experience of the coaling arrangements that are being provided at Portland. In spite of the suggestions made, the Dockyard Members need be under no apprehension that the wages in the Dockyards will have to be cut down. The Government have no intention of initiating any spasmodic reductions in numbers, but we expect that by a gradual process of waste they will come down to their normal strength. From what I gather the last Government must have been an uncommonly happy family.

Last night the late Secretary of the Treasury (Sir John Gorst) attacked the late Admiralty ; while the late Solicitor General condemned the system of classification which they introduced. And to-day I have been greatly amused at the observations of the noble Lord regarding the Treasury. I can assure the House that there are no differences between the present Board of Admiralty and the Treasury. Their relations form an acute contrast to those which evidently existed between certain Members of the late Government. With regard to new ships, I must decline to give detailed information in public which might be used by foreign Governments to the detriment of this country. If, however, the noble Lord or the right hon. Gentleman the late Secretary of the Admiralty desire fuller information, I shall be happy to show them the designs of the proposed new vessels when they are complete. The noble Lord says we should give information to the House of our intentions in regard to all these matters ; but I would remind him that in last year's Estimates he gave less information as regards his ships of the Further Programme than we are giving of those which we propose to commence.

**LORD GEORGE HAMILTON :** I proposed to spend a very small sum towards the end of the financial year. The House should have a guarantee of the manner in which this money is to be spent.

**SIR U. KAY-SHUTTLEWORTH :** One point to which the noble Lord alluded was his scheme of defence of naval ports by naval forces, but his views now differ from those which he held in February, 1891, and embodied in his statement to Parliament on the Estimates. He then said—

“ I admit that if such a change could be carried out it would tend to secure unity of action and responsibility, and would, in an emergency, secure at the great naval ports the rapid utilization of all available resources, for whatever movement the exigency of the moment might require. But it is a proposal that involves so immense a change, that it is not under any conditions practicable in the immediate future. The transfers of men and money, material and buildings, which it entails would revolutionise the proportions the Army and Navy now bear to one another, and many experienced naval officers are averse to the change. Moreover, its increased cost in one direction is certain, whilst the counterbalancing savings are problematical. Still, looking to the fact that nearly

every Foreign Power has adopted the principle of placing their Naval Authorities in charge of maritime defences, care should be taken that the various alterations which from time to time must occur in the organisation both of the Army and Navy do not increase the obstacles to such a transfer of duties. Further investigation and experience can alone determine whether the change is desirable in the common interests of both Services, and nothing in the meantime should be done to prejudice that future decision."

Under these circumstances we may fairly ask the House to pause before it commits itself to so great a change.

MR. FORWOOD (Lancashire, Ormskirk): I do not rise for the purpose of stopping the Vote, though I do not think that three hours' discussion is very long for such important subjects as have been before us. Three hours is a very short time when you consider the importance of the Vote. I promise, however, that I will not occupy more than a few moments. As I have said, I am not going to object to the Vote, and I do not propose to go into detail; but there are one or two points upon which we might reasonably ask for further information. There are one or two points to which I wish to allude. I think it was very satisfactory to read in the Statement of the First Lord of the Admiralty that the programme of construction under the Naval Defence Act has been fully realised, and that at the end of this year only nine vessels out of the 70 which are ordered will remain unfinished, and that they would have been finished had it not been necessary to adjust the labour question at the dockyards. In reference to the boilers and machinery for the vessels of the Navy, a very interesting and important Report has been published by a Committee, and I venture to say that a more valuable document has seldom been introduced in a Public Department. I would ask the right hon. Gentleman whether he will not allow that Report, or portions of it, to be made public, as it will be of considerable value to the Mercantile Marine of the country. I should have liked to know what was done with the £100,000 which was taken for boilers last year. No doubt it has been used for other purposes and used advantageously, but it would have been advantageous if we could have had information on that point. It is satisfactory to see that the transfer of the Naval Ordnance Department to the Navy

has worked so well for eighteen months. The deficiencies in Naval Ordnance at this moment are less than they were expected to be. Another point that is satisfactory is that only £2,200,000 remains to complete the vessels that are left on hand under the Naval Defence Act. That compares most favourably with the £6,000,000 the late Government had to provide to complete the vessels when my noble Friend took charge at the Admiralty. Another point of satisfaction is that the Dockyard and contract ships under the Naval Defence Act, which were estimated roughly to cost £21,500,000, have been constructed within £650,000 of the estimates; but probably the whole difference between the estimated cost and that accounted for only amounts to something less than £100,000. The Secretary to the Admiralty alluded to the Programme, and to the depreciation of the Navy; but the strength of the Navy will not be considered sufficient until the whole of the Naval Defence ships have been added to it. When they have been added the amount necessary to meet depreciation, and to keep up the Navy will be £2,350,000, as stated by my noble Friend. As to the two cruisers, each of them is to cost roughly £700,000. I want the House to understand what a marvellous departure that means—what a great change in naval shipbuilding policy. The cost of a cruiser may be taken at £35 per ton of displacement; therefore, these vessels are to be of the approximately enormous size of 20,000 tons displacement, which is practically the size of the largest vessel that crosses the Atlantic, and we are to jump up from 9,000 to 20,000 tons. That is an enormous advance, which requires some consideration and thought. At present we have no particulars about it. Upon the question of the Works Vote, I wish to call the right hon. Gentleman's attention to one point. I observe that in the expenditure proposed this year no less a sum than £20,000 has been unspent. I think it is not a good principle that large sums of money should be voted for works which are not carried out, and the money devoted to other purposes. Among these works there is the Sheerness Gunnery School, which is to cost £9,000. £3,000 was provided in last year's Estimate, but it has dis-



appeared altogether in the succeeding year's Estimate. I do not know whether the school is completed, or whether the idea of constructing it has been abandoned. As to the merchant cruisers, there seems to have been a misapprehension on the part of some hon. Members in reference to the Inman ships which have been transferred to the American flag. We pay to the owners of these vessels a certain sum every year on condition that if the Admiralty require the vessels their services are at their command. It is provided that the year's hire shall always be kept in hand, so that if the owners desire to sell the ships, and the Admiralty do not take them or hire them, the hire of each ship will be sacrificed by the owners, and some £18,000 or £20,000 will remain in the hands of the Admiralty that might have been claimed by the owners. I hope the policy which was carefully thought out and considered by this House is not now going to be abandoned by the Government; but that, instead of reducing they will rather increase the number of really the best of the merchant ships now in use.

**THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EX-CHEQUER** (Sir W. HARCOURT, Derby): I feel obliged to appeal to the House to allow this Vote to pass. Everybody knows that arrangements have been made (which it would be inconvenient to alter) for taking the Army Estimates on Thursday. I hope that arrangement will not be altered. I trust that hon. Members, of whom I have no doubt there are many, who desire to offer further observations on the Vote under consideration will reserve those observations.

**MR. A. J. BALFOUR** (Manchester, E.): The situation, as I understand it, is this: We were engaged last night in discussing certain questions relating to the Navy Vote, but those questions were not in reality Navy questions but Labour questions, and they were of great importance. The Vote now before us, which bears upon Naval policy, has been debated now for only three hours, perhaps through the necessities of the case, and hon. Gentlemen opposite have taken a leading part in the discussion. The right hon. Gentleman now suggests that such observations as Members may desire to make should be made on a later stage of the Vote. But as the right hon.

Gentleman is aware, you, Mr. Mellor, have quite rightly, in the exercise of your office, strictly confined the discussion to questions relevant to the Vote before the House. A stringency not undue, but still a considerable stringency has been shown by the Chair in limiting the discussion; and, therefore, it would not be safe for any hon. Gentleman to defer to a later Vote any observations he may desire to make which would be in "Order" on this Vote, but which might turn out to be out of "Order" on other Votes. I would venture to suggest as a compromise that the Vote for the men should be taken, and that there should be a brief discussion on the Vote for money—Vote 2—which should be taken at a later date. That would conciliate all opinions on both sides of the House, and I do not believe that in the long run the Government will make any less rapid progress by agreeing to this compromise.

**SIR W. HARCOURT**: Unless the Money Vote is taken we shall do nothing at all to-day. It has been the practice to take a large discussion on this Vote, it has also been considered in "Order" to discuss on this Vote subjects which might be discussed on the Victualling Vote. I think I am correct in this, and therefore I hope there will be no objection to allowing the Money Vote to be taken, and the discussion to be resumed on the Victualling Vote.

**MR. HANBURY**: The right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer cannot direct the Chairman, who has taken up a new position—a proper position—against which the Opposition are not going to protest in any way. It certainly, however, has the effect of altering the circumstances under which we discuss these Votes. We have no guarantee whatever that we can discuss on the Victualling Vote matters which we are perfectly entitled to discuss on the first Vote. That being the case, I do hope that the Leader of the Opposition will be no party to the proposal of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, but that he will reserve our full right to discuss the Votes on some subsequent day.

**\*THE CHAIRMAN**: On this first Vote I allowed a general discussion on topics connected with the Admiralty, and the only restriction I laid down was what I found to be according to the

Rules of the House—namely, that specific matters which ought to come under some other Vote could not come under this, nor could anyone go into matters of detail on other Votes, but only on matters contained in this Vote.

MR. T. G. BOWLES : This is a Vote for 76,600 men. I desire to move a reduction of that, and I wish to know whether I shall be able to do so. The reduction I should propose would be of one man—namely, the Admiral at Portsmouth. Shall I be in Order in doing that, and in giving my reasons for the Motion ?

\*THE CHAIRMAN : The reduction must be a substantial one. That has been ruled over and over again.

MR. T. G. BOWLES : He is an Admiral, Sir.

MR. PAUL (Edinburgh, S.) rose in his place, and claimed to move "That the Question be now put."

Question, "That the Question be now put," put, and agreed to.

Vote agreed to.

Resolution to be reported To-morrow.

Committee to sit again To-morrow.

It being ten minutes before Seven of the clock, the Chairman left the Chair.

House resumed.

#### BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR : Perhaps the right hon. Gentleman will tell us what will be the first Order on Thursday ?

SIR W. HARCOURT : There might be some inconvenience in proceeding with the Navy Estimates. The Army Estimates will be taken on Thursday.

MR. HANBURY asked whether the right hon. Gentleman intended to stand by the arrangement announced at the commencement of the Sitting, namely, that the Supplementary Army Estimates would be taken first. If that course was not pursued, he should like to know what precedent there was for taking money for the coming year before the money for the past year had been obtained.

\*MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN : If it was stated at the commencement of the Sitting that the Supplementary Army Estimates were to be taken first on Thursday, I think it must have been

owing to a misunderstanding. I have consulted the Authorities of the House, and I find that the Supplementary Estimates can be taken either before or after the Ordinary Estimates. It seems to me convenient that we should take the first Vote in the regular Estimates first, and afterwards the Supplementary Estimates. The latter do not contain any specific items, but are mainly representative of certain overcharges that have to be paid in connection with the first Vote of the Army Estimates.

MR. HANBURY : May I ask you, Mr. Speaker, if it is according to the practice of the House to take money for the coming year before the Supplementary Estimates for the past year are before the House ?

\*MR. SPEAKER : It was done in 1889 and on other occasions.

#### EVENING SITTING.

#### MOTIONS.

#### PLEURO-PNEUMONIA.

##### RESOLUTION.

MR. MACARTNEY (Antrim, S.) rose to call attention to the introduction of pleuro-pneumonia into the United Kingdom by the importation of foreign cattle affected with that disease in the month of September last, and to move the following Resolution:—

"That this House is of opinion that, subject to the exemptions contained in Section 2 of the fifth Schedule of the Contagious Diseases (Animals) Act of 1878, no foreign animal landing in the country should be allowed to leave the wharf alive."

He said he claimed for this Motion that it was not open to the objections very often urged against proposals made on these occasions by non-official Members of the House, namely, that their scope was limited, their area restricted, and their proposals indefinitely vague. He believed that, whatever might be the views which Members in various quarters of the House might take of his Motion, no one would deny for a moment that it dealt with a matter of the most vital importance to one of the greatest interests of this country. As the hon. Member for West Aberdeenshire (Dr. Farquharson) had placed an Amendment on the Paper, it would be necessary

for him (Mr. Macartney) to deal with the conditions under which the importation of foreign cattle into this country had been carried on during the last 40 or 50 years. Since 1846 the importation of foreign cattle had been absolutely free, subject to the restrictions imposed from time to time under legislation authorised by the House of Commons for the purpose of preventing the introduction of disease from foreign countries. The two principal measures under which the importation of foreign cattle had been dealt with were the Acts of 1869 and that of 1878. The Act of 1869 laid down the principle that the importation of foreign cattle should be absolutely free, subject only to certain powers reserved to the Privy Council, enabling that Body to prohibit, either absolutely or partially, the importation of foreign cattle, and also enabling them to order the slaughter of such cattle at certain specified ports. The experience of the working of that Act showed that it was not a sufficient remedy against the importation and spread of contagious diseases amongst animals, and it was followed by the Act of 1878. The last-named Act was an entirely new departure, and constituted an almost complete reversal of the principle on which the Act of 1869 was based. It laid down as its primary principle that all foreign cattle should be slaughtered at the port of debarkation. It reserved to the Privy Council the powers of prohibition given by the Act of 1869, but provided that when any foreign country could show that the laws enforced within its borders respecting the importation and exportation of cattle, and respecting the contagious diseases of animals were sufficient, the Privy Council might allow the importation of live cattle from that country into the United Kingdom. It was the 5th Schedule of the Act of 1878 which governed the question, and it was under these conditions that the trade was now being carried on. He should have to ask the House to consider whether, under these varying restrictions, the object towards which they had been directed had been successfully carried out. He fancied that very few Members who had not made a study of the question or were not interested in agriculture could have any conception of the great destruction of cattle which had been occasioned by

*Mr. Macartney*

the introduction of pleuro-pneumonia and other contagious diseases. One occasionally saw a small paragraph in the newspapers stating that pleuro-pneumonia had suddenly burst out in one or two districts, but it was difficult to conceive what a vast amount of injury was done in those districts, and probably in a large area outside them, by such outbreaks. During the first 10 years after the passing of the Act of 1869, the average yearly number of fresh outbreaks of pleuro-pneumonia in this country was 2,159. During the 10 years from 1880 to 1889 inclusive, the average number of fresh outbreaks had fallen to 549, and in 1891 the number was 192. What was the effect of these outbreaks in the United Kingdom, as far as the loss of cattle was concerned? From 1890 to 1891 the number of cattle attacked exceeded 78,000, the number killed exceeded 65,000, the number that died of the complaint exceeded 7,000, and, what was more important and significant than all, the number of healthy beasts slaughtered because they had been in contact with diseased cattle exceeded 67,000. Thus in those 22 years the total loss of cattle in England, Scotland, and Wales exceeded 139,000. The figures for Ireland covered a different period, but he might mention that during the 13 years from 1878 to 1891 inclusive, the number of cattle slaughtered or that died in consequence of outbreaks of pleuro-pneumonia exceeded 25,000. He contended that the mischief and the loss sustained by this country was not to be measured, however, entirely by the number of cattle killed. It was necessary also to bear in mind the amount of compensation that had to be paid by the taxpayers to those who suffered under the provisions for restraining the disease. Only last year a sum of £18,000 had to be spent in compensation for outbreaks of pleuro-pneumonia, which were traced to the importation of two cargoes of Canadian cattle. We sustained a further loss from the impoverishment of our breeding resources, and no inconsiderable loss arose also from the dislocation of trade consequent upon the necessarily uncertain, though temporary, regulations adopted for isolating infected and scheduled districts. In 1888 a very important Departmental Committee sat to consider the question. They declared

that pleuro-pneumonia was an imported, and not an indigenous, disease. Further, they declared that pleuro-pneumonia was an incurable disease, and that the only proper treatment was the preventive treatment. In the third place, they reported that the disease was communicable to living animals through their respiratory organs. Bearing this fact in mind, and remembering, also, that Departmental Committees reported that slaughter had always been successful, he thought the House had now sufficient and ample grounds for forming an opinion as to what should be the next step we should take in order to secure those who were engaged in the cattle trade in this country from further loss from this disease. The only step Parliament was warranted in taking—and it was a step clearly indicated by the experience which had been gained in the administration of the Acts and by the evidence of all the scientific authorities—was to make the slaughter of all foreign animals at the port of debarkation arbitrary and absolute. If that step were not taken Parliament left open one certain road by which the cattle trade of this country would always be exposed to risk of contagion. One of the greatest difficulties in dealing with this disease was the fact that it might be latent for two, two and a-half, three, or even a greater number of months, and all scientific evidence that had been given showed that the closest examinations carried on at the port of debarkation was not sufficient to secure the country against the importation of diseased animals. One or two diseased animals passing through a port might carry into the centre of the country the seeds of an outbreak of disease, which might cost the ratepayers large sums of money and result in the destruction of enormous numbers of cattle. Of course, much had already been done to secure the agricultural interest from this mischief, but it was clear that further restrictions would be the most effectual safeguards against pleuro-pneumonia. He urged the House to consider what objections could be urged against taking a course which experience and scientific authority pointed out as the only effectual one to be adopted in dealing with this disease. It had been said that pleuro-pneumonia had been brought into Great Britain from Ireland

through the medium of Irish store cattle. He did not know what foundation there might have been for this suggestion some years ago, but at the present moment there was very little substance in it. The Departmental Committee of 1888 investigated the question very thoroughly, and reported that the allegations made by the Scotch witnesses on the subject had not been proved conclusively. They pointed out that the Irish cattle going into the Scotch markets might have contracted the disease originally from Scotch beasts with which they were brought into contact. The Committee also said that of late years pleuro-pneumonia had been entirely confined to Dublin and the districts into which Dublin dairy cows were introduced. The Dublin dairy districts had quite recently been placed under the most stringent regulations. A district called "the Dublin Scheduled District" had been formed, and no cattle could be moved outside the district except for slaughter, whilst none could be moved within it except on certificate. Thus the regulations in force in the one district in Ireland in which the Departmental Committee found outbreaks of pleuro-pneumonia to be most frequent were now so stringent that it was almost impossible for any great risk to be incurred by the trans-channel trade between Ireland and Scotland. The statistics connected with the outbreak of pleuro-pneumonia showed that a very considerable decrease had taken place in the disease. For instance, the percentage of diseased cattle amongst those slaughtered through having been in contact with infected animals was in 1888, 28·6, and in 1891 it was only 8·6 per cent. But there was another argument which would conclusively dispose of the assertion that the north-eastern districts of Scotland were infected from Ireland. Almost all the store cattle going across the Channel to the north-eastern districts of Scotland were drawn from the northern part of Ireland. The cattle crossing from Dublin went almost entirely to Liverpool. The number taken across in 1892 amounted to 78,000. The cattle to the south-east of Scotland from the North of Ireland had been declared to be free from pleuro-pneumonia, and the Committee of 1888 had found Bristol and the neighbourhood into which a large number of Irish

cattle were imported comparatively free from the disease. So far as the accusation made against Irish cattle was concerned—whatever might have been the case some years ago, and whatever foundation there might be for it at the present moment—there was no reason to suppose there was any danger in the future. There was another objection, which, if it was true, would undoubtedly be a strong and valid reason for opposing the Motion—namely, that this interference with the importation of foreign cattle would be unfair to the consumer by limiting the supply and, he presumed, in all probability, by enhancing the price of meat. But it would be impossible for the hon. Member for Dundee to lay any figures before the House which could for a moment sustain that argument. The case, to his mind, was perfectly clear the other way. Formerly Germany, Schleswig-Holstein, Portugal, Spain, and France used to import live cattle into this country. This importation was now prohibited, and Returns showed that since the prohibition the supply of meat had increased, whilst the price had diminished. The most significant example of all was the case of the United States. Up to 1879 the United States cattle were imported free to this country. Something over 68,000 head were imported in 1879, but after the prohibition in 1891 the number of carcasses imported was 314,000, showing that the trade had largely increased. As to prices, he found that in the Metropolitan Market in 1871 they ranged from 5½d. per lb. to 8½d., whereas in 1891 they had fallen to from 4½d. to 7½d. In Glasgow in 1871 the prices were from 6½d. to 7½d.; in 1891 they were from 4d. to 5½d. In Liverpool there was an even more extraordinary reduction in prices, for whilst in 1871 they were from 5½d. to 7d., in 1891 they were from 2½d. to 5½d. And at the same time the Returns from the Metropolitan and Deptford Markets showed that the amount of foreign cattle, instead of decreasing under the restrictions, had gone on increasing. In 1872 the number of foreign cattle in these two markets was 108,000; in 1882 it had risen to 157,000, and in 1891 to 168,000. The only grounds, therefore, upon which the Member for Dundee could defend Amendment to the Motion were shown away by the figures which the

*Mr. Macartney*

Returns showed. Clearly the Motion on the Paper was in the interest both of the consumer and the producer. He submitted that neither the hon. Member for West Aberdeen nor the Member for Dundee would be able to deduce a single argument based on general facts and applicable to the whole trade of the country that ought to weigh with hon. Members in inducing them to support the Amendment. Then, he came to consider what was the real object underlying the Amendment. The Amendment of the hon. Member for Dundee was based not upon any general concern for the consumer of the United Kingdom, but in the interest of a small, though, no doubt, important section of the farmers of this country. He should be the last person to deprecate the interests of the farmers of any district in Scotland receiving due attention from the House. But he did say this, that when he looked at the great interests that had been threatened and had been seriously injured in the past, no hon. Member had a right to intervene and prevent that which experience and science declared to be the only practicable step to protect the cattle producer in the United Kingdom, especially when that intervention was only in the interest of a small, though highly intelligent and important section of the agricultural community. If his arguments were to hold good they would have to introduce legislation for every small division of agriculture. But surely they were entitled to deal with the whole question in a broad spirit, and he submitted that so far from it being prejudicial it would be advantageous to the interests of the consumers themselves that every precaution should be taken against one of the most fatal influences that had ever invaded the agriculture of the United Kingdom. The Aberdeenshire farmers, who desired that there should be no restriction upon the importation of Canadian cattle, were actuated by a natural but selfish motive. The Canadian trade in live stock had, since 1875, increased enormously, and of the 108,000 head imported alive in 1891, Scotland took 54,000, the greater number of which went to Glasgow, to Aberdeen and to Dundee. Hence the farmers had strong reasons for opposing any restrictions on this trade. He would not go to admit that the Aberdeen-

shire farmers found that Canadian store cattle were more profitable for fattening purposes than English or Irish store cattle were, but he submitted that that House was not bound to give more weight to the interests of Aberdeenshire than they did to those of the general agricultural community. It was a curious fact that the importation of these Canadian cattle into Aberdeenshire and Forfarshire was accompanied by an abnormal amount of pleuro-pneumonia in those districts. In Aberdeenshire there had been five or six outbreaks, and in Forfarshire there had been six outbreaks of disease during the last year. There was, therefore, considerable ground for connecting those outbreaks with the importation of these cattle. This was a significant fact. As long as the importation of Canadian live stock was permitted, and as long as they left a road, he did not care how narrow, for the disease to find its way into this country so long would it be impossible to take any effectual steps in the way of isolation and of stamping out the disease. He trusted that he had been able to justify the Motion he had placed upon the Paper, and that hon. Members on both sides of the House seeing the important bearing it had upon the agricultural interests of the United Kingdom would deal with it upon its merits. He begged to move the Resolution which stood in his name.

SIR MARK J. STEWART (Kirkcudbright) said, he had much pleasure and satisfaction in seconding the Resolution. His hon. Friend had dealt with the subject in so comprehensive a manner and had put the House so completely in possession of the main facts that little was left for him to say. He was, however, glad to congratulate the House on the fact that it was approaching the discussion of this subject in a calm and reasonable manner, and not in that spirit of terror and anxiety which characterised the passing of the Act of 1877. There was at the present time in this country comparative immunity from pleuro-pneumonia, thanks to the action of the right hon. Member for the Sleaford Division of Lincolnshire and to the right hon. Gentleman who acted as Minister for Agriculture, and Members on his side of the House were certainly prepared to endorse and thank them for

the policy which had been pursued. There could be no doubt that there had been an unfortunate outbreak of cattle disease in Aberdeenshire last year, although there was a dispute as to whether it was pleuro-pneumonia or not. When doctors differed it was difficult for an ordinary individual to arrive at a right conclusion, but the Board of Agriculture were fully convinced that it was that disease, and therefore the right hon. Gentleman opposite could not do otherwise than follow the course of his Predecessor in Office. The hon. Member for Aberdeenshire had referred to the fact that the farmers of Aberdeenshire had proved Canadian cattle to be the most profitable for fattening purposes. But his own opinion was that there was so little difference between Canadian, Irish, and Scotch store stock, that it did not justify the risk which the importation from Canada involved. He believed, too, that the Scotch and Irish animals were more early matured than Canadian, and produced better meat. Aberdeenshire farmers had always been noted for sending the best meat to Islington, and they gained that character long before Canadian stock was imported. In his opinion the restriction upon the importation of those cattle would be of the greatest service to the consumer, especially in view of the enormous increase in the dead meat trade from New Zealand and elsewhere. It had been proved over and over again, and for the last 20 years, that consumers did not lose by these restrictions. In 1877 the Radical Party asserted that the effect of passing the Bill brought in that year would be to raise the prices, but instead of that prices had been dropping, and would continue to do so. Only the previous day a steamer capable of carrying 1,000 carcasses was launched in the interests of the New Zealand frozen meat trade, and there was, therefore, no fear of the consumer suffering. On the contrary; the imposition of restrictions calculated to prevent the disease breaking out would benefit the consumer and the farmer alike, and would help agriculture to rally from the depression under which it was now suffering. The benefit to the farmers of the country arising out of the restriction of the import of live stock might be estimated when he told the House that during the last few years

139,000 cattle had been compulsorily slaughtered in consequence of the prevalence of cattle disease imported from abroad, while the taxpayer had had to pay between £17,000 and £18,000 per annum for stamping out the disease. In the face of testimony like that, they ought to be careful as to the policy they adopted. There were, they were told, three ways of dealing with the disease: First, there was isolation; then inoculation, and as to that he would point out that inoculation for the purpose of preventing the spread of the disease was practically useless owing to the length of time that was required for it to become effective—i.e., three months. The third point was the strongest of all—namely, slaughter. A Committee which had fully considered this subject had reported in favour of cattle being slaughtered at the port of debarkation, and the object of this Motion was to put in practice that recommendation. If the House adopted it as the main-sheet of its policy, it would, at any rate, have passed one good Resolution this year. Pleuro-pneumonia was a foreign disease; it was incurable, and it was communicable by contact and through the respiratory organs of other animals. The Netherlands had been free from the disease since they adopted the policy of slaughter. Prior to 1885 their herds and flocks were simply decimated by it. As to Ireland, he could corroborate from personal experience what his hon. Friend had said upon that point. At the time of the Commission of 1878 nearly every Scotch farmer stated that the disease came from Ireland. He was, however, informed by the Member for Tewkesbury that during the last 14 years no pleuro-pneumonia had been imported from Ireland, notwithstanding that Bristol was the second largest port in respect of the importation of Irish cattle. That showed that the Irish farmers were taking more trouble and pains to keep their herds healthy, and it was one of the results of the action of the Local Authorities in working heartily with the Privy Council in its efforts to stamp out disease. He hoped the Minister for Agriculture would remember that this disease was of foreign origin. If it were stamped out by slaughter at the port of debarkation, they had done with it; but if it were allowed to get into a central district, it would spread all over the

*Sir Mark J. Stewart*

country, and then their restrictions by Act of Parliament would be found to be futile for the purpose of getting rid of it.

Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That this House is of opinion that, subject to the exemptions contained in Section 2 of the fifth Schedule of the Contagious Diseases (Animals) Act of 1878, no Foreign animal landing in the country should be allowed to leave the wharf alive."—(*Mr. Macartney.*)

THE SOLICITOR GENERAL (Sir J. RIGBY, Forfar): I desire to intervene in this Debate at this moment, not that I lack sympathy with the object of the Mover of the Resolution, but rather in order to point out to the House that the Resolution proposes to do nothing more nor less than to repeal an Act of Parliament. I express no opinion on the merits of the Motion. I simply warn the House what is its purport. Indeed, I am inclined to think the hon. Member's scheme may be a very fit subject for discussion by the House. What he asks is that, subject to certain exceptions contained in the 2nd section of the 5th Schedule of the Contagious Diseases Animals Act, 1878, no foreign animal landed in this country shall be allowed to leave the wharf alive. The exceptions are very narrow; they are limited to animals intended for exhibition and for other exceptional purposes, and in these cases they are subjected to quarantine. It is perfectly plain, from the further provisions of the Act, that if the Privy Council (which Body is now represented by the Board of Agriculture) is reasonably satisfied that the introduction of foreign animals will not produce disease, then their introduction "shall" be allowed independently of the 1st clause; that is to say, the most responsible question is left to the Board of Agriculture to decide. They have to say upon the facts before them whether they are reasonably satisfied that there is no danger, and if they so find they must admit the animals. It is a question of fact. No Resolution of the House can properly over-ride an Act of Parliament. If there is danger, and if the Board so find, their duty is plain, and they must not allow the introduction of the animals; but, if there is no reasonable danger, the Board are ordered by the Act of Parliament to allow their introduction. I re-

nothing to say as to the

merits on one side or the other. I only wish to call attention to the existing state of things, and to point out that the Act of Parliament is clear upon the point.

\*MR. DARLING (Deptford) remarked that no one in the House was half so much indebted to the hon. and learned Gentleman the Solicitor General as he himself was. He had just conclusively shown what no one before doubted—that, when an Act of Parliament contained the word “shall,” it left no option to the Minister who was to carry it out. Yet every candidate who had been sent down to Deptford in the Radical interest had told his constituents that the word was entirely permissive, as they would find out if they changed their Representative. It had also been asserted that when the animals were excluded from Deptford it was because the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Sleaford was an inveterate Protectionist; and that if he were replaced by another and more eminent gentleman, they would find that the Minister for Agriculture would construe the word entirely as he pleased. He had spent a good deal of time in trying to convince people that the word “shall,” whether in or out of an Act of Parliament, could have but one meaning, and he would, in future, cite the hon. and learned Gentleman as an authority in support of that view. He only wished that Lord Edmond Fitzmaurice had been acquainted with that opinion when he was contesting Deptford a few months ago. Still, the words of the hon. and learned Gentleman would be of great use in the constituency of Deptford on all future occasions. His interest in the question was purely local and personal. The hon. Member who had brought the question forward had reproached the Scotch for one of their chief virtues—their selfishness. The hon. Member had regretted that the Scotch were selfish. He might as well have regretted that the Scotch were Scotch. The Scotch did not take a Canadian or a South American view of this matter—they took a Scotch view of it, and the people of Deptford, for whom he was concerned, took *mutatis mutandis* a Scotch view of it also. The people of Deptford took the view of it that they had been carrying on a lucrative business before they were interfered with by

Ministers of Agriculture, all of whom they placed in the same bad category. The people of Deptford had been accustomed for years, until the Act of 1884 was passed, to carry on the business of killing cattle in their markets, and the people of Bermondsey and Rotherhithe turned the hides and bones of the cattle into useful articles. These industries had been interfered with it was alleged simply because the agriculturist desired protection not against disease, but against the fall of prices in the home markets. Parliament, as the Solicitor General had truly said, had passed an Act which gave the agriculturist that protection, and the Solicitor General was shocked—in fact, he had never seen anyone more horrified—at the notion of repealing an Act of Parliament. The right hon. Gentleman was like our ancestors—he was unwilling to change the laws of England. He reminded him (Mr. Darling) of King John at Runnymede. He only wished that the Solicitor General was surrounded by hon. Members who shared his sentiments. The Motion which he supported desired to repeal not one Act, but two Acts of Parliament—it desired to repeal the Acts of 1878 and 1884. So lost to all sense of shame was this Motion that it went the length of desiring to turn the word “shall” into “may.” It desired to give the Minister of Agriculture an option. The aim of the present Government seemed to be to give everyone an option, and why should not the Minister of Agriculture have an option as well as the rest? He had frequently brought before the House a modest proposal to change the word “shall” in the Act of 1884 into “may”; but this Motion went much further, for it proposed that no foreign cattle should leave the wharf alive, and the slaughter of the cattle at the wharf admirably suited the end he had in view. How did the matter stand at present? Until the Act of 1884 the common practice under the Act of 1878 was to allow animals coming from infected countries to be landed at places where preparations had been made for their reception.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF AGRICULTURE (Mr. H. GARDNER, Essex, Saffron Walden) pointed out that the Motion before the House dealt only with pleuro-pneumonia.



MR. DARLING said, he would show the right hon. Gentleman that the Motion was of a much wider scope. It referred generally to "foreign cattle," and not only to foreign cattle affected with pleuro-pneumonia. Whether the cattle were infected, or whether they were not, the Motion declared that they should be slaughtered at the wharfs.

SIR J. RIGBY said, that if the hon. Member referred to a clause in the Act of 1884, he would find that what he had said was strictly accurate—that the Privy Council, for which the Board of Agriculture had been substituted—might, if they were satisfied, allow these animals to be introduced into the country.

\*MR. DARLING said, he knew that that exactly was the law, and it was that law he desired to repeal. He had said that this question was to him a local one, but it was no more local in that respect than it was when viewed as affecting the agricultural interest, for after all the agricultural interest was an interest affecting a number of individuals. The interest of his constituents in this matter was a similar interest. A huge Metropolitan Market had been set up at Deptford by the City of London, at a great cost, and provided with every kind of appliance for preventing the spread of disease. The policy of Parliament at that time was that animals from infected countries should be allowed to land on the condition that they should be instantly slaughtered, and not allowed to go alive into the country. There congregated round the market at Deptford many hundreds of people who got their living directly by the slaughter of these animals, and there also grew up a number of subsidiary industries depending upon the skins and other portions of the animals killed in the market, which employed hundreds of people. The Act of 1884 was passed by Parliament, and it was first put into operation, owing to an outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease abroad, by the Minister of Agriculture in the late Government, and it had been continued in operation, in every particular, by the present occupant of the office. What was the consequence? The purpose for which the Deptford Market had been established was now a thing of the past. The old policy had been altered by Act of Parliament, and the Solicitor

General was horrified because he desired to repeal that Act of Parliament. But really one would go that length when the lives and fortunes of his constituents were at stake. The industries to which he had referred had also languished. The thousands of pounds which used to go to Deptford, Bermondsey, Rotherhithe, and Greenwich did not go there now. The market was not carried on because the animals were not brought there. There had hardly been a sheep in the market for years, though a certain amount of cattle still went there, but the number was nothing like what used to go there before the Act of 1884 was passed. These facts were perfectly well-known to the House. They were perfectly well-known to the Minister of Agriculture, because one of the right hon. Gentleman's first acts, after taking Office, was to receive a deputation from the South-East of London representing all shades of political opinion, which pressed him, in the interest of the whole South-East of London, to repeal the Act of 1884, or that, at all events, he should allow the importation of cattle from the various countries from which he had prohibited importation. The right hon. Gentleman had been placed in possession of the case of these people, and of the hardship to which they had been subjected by reason in the change of the policy of Parliament. The right hon. Gentleman had explained to the deputation that he had no option in the matter but to carry out the law. Would he welcome a change in the law? Would he either have the word "shall" in the Act changed into "may," or would he agree to the second part of the Motion, that no imported animal should be allowed to leave the market in London alive? If the right hon. Gentleman agreed to that, he would perhaps win the Deptford seat for his Party, among other minor advantages. No animals coming from countries in which there was the slightest chance of infection were allowed to go out of the markets alive, for this Act of Parliament was applied not only to countries affected with pleuro-pneumonia, but was applied also to countries in which, in the opinion of the Board of Agriculture, the laws relating to cattle were unsatisfactory. In fact, the prohibition extended to so many instances that really it would be better to have a hard-and-fast law prohibiting live

animals from going alive about the country at all. The question was really a question between absolute prohibition and having dead meat in the country for the benefit of the consumer. It had been said that to prevent, in the interest of agriculture, foreign cattle from coming into the country would be an injustice to the consumer. His constituents were unwilling that that injustice should be done to the consumer; they were perfectly willing that the consumer should have his dinner from abroad. If the prohibition was given up in favour of the landing and slaughter of cattle at places like Deptford, then the smaller difficulty about the consumer would be got over. What was the case against Deptford? It was simply this: that some years ago a case of foot-and-mouth disease got away from the Deptford Market, and affected animals in London and the rest of England. There was only the very slightest evidence in support of that case. In the Veterinary Report the experts, in a couple of lines, gave it as their opinion that the animal which had caused foot-and-mouth disease had arrived at Deptford, and had got away from there. But the amount of evidence in support of that statement was very slight. It had failed to convince a large number of persons, and he had constantly heard it said by political allies of the Minister of Agriculture that it only convinced his right hon. Friend the Minister of Agriculture in the late Government (Mr. Chaplin) because he had been already half-convinced as a Protectionist. Under these circumstances, he trusted that he would not be alone amongst Members of the Metropolis in supporting the Motion; and if the Motion, in addition to doing good to hardly-pressed industries of the Metropolis, and to hardly-pressed people engaged in them, did also do some good to agriculturists and stock raisers, would it not, he asked, be better than following the maxims of a too prudish political economy?

\*DR. FARQUHARSON (Aberdeenshire, W.) said that, however selfish the Scotch might be in a general way, that did not affect the question now under consideration. He, at least, was sufficiently patriotic to give his adhesion to the Mover of the Motion in his desire to exclude disease from the flocks and herds of the country. They had already

succeeded in stamping out the cattle plague, and he believed that the foot-and-mouth disease was already a thing of the past, and he quite agreed with the Mover of the Motion as to the great destruction caused to the flocks and herds—the great expense and money and inconvenience which had come upon the agricultural community, by the recurrence of attacks of pleuro-pneumonia throughout the country. He also agreed with the Mover of the Motion that pleuro-pneumonia was purely an exotic disease. It had no power to spring up spontaneously in this country; and if they could stamp it out at once, and if they could draw an effective cordon round the disease, there was no reason why the country should not be always free from the scourge. He wished to give his cordial support and concurrence to the way in which the Board of Agriculture, under the late and under the present Administrations, had carried out its functions with regard to stamping out this disease. The Board had a policy which was coherent, cohesive, firm, consistent, and which in every way was a great improvement on the old system. He would like to ask whether it would not have been better, before the recent Regulations of the Board of Agriculture dealing with this disease had been put into operation, to have carried out some kind of scientific investigation, by inoculation of cattle or by contact, by which it would have been discovered whether the disease was really pleuro-pneumonia or not? Probably, before the discussion terminated, the Minister of Agriculture would tell the House what truth there was in the rumours circulated lately that an inquiry instituted by the Canadian Government had found that Canada was, and had been for a good many years, entirely free from this very infectious disease. It was worth considering, therefore, whether it was not better for agriculturists to take the chance of a little disease coming in from abroad than to be shut out altogether from the introduction of store cattle, from which at the present time they were deriving great benefits. He would also like to ask whether this Motion was not, after all, a mode of protection for a particular form of home industry—a mode of protection which had been entirely negated

by the exhaustive inquiry of the Select Committee in 1873? The Scotch Members had been told that they were selfish in their policy of bringing forward the views which in this matter their constituents desired them to bring forward. He supposed they were all selfish, more or less. Every Member almost was sent to the House to advocate a special and individual interest, and what the Government had to do when they had the bulk of the evidence before them was to consider what was best to be done for the advantage of the country at large. The importation of cattle to the North of Scotland was a young industry. He was bound to say that it had been originally established on account of the great inconvenience and loss which the farmers of Aberdeenshire and the North of Scotland had suffered by the spreading of disease by Irish cattle; but he was quite prepared to accept the statement that, owing to better regulations and sanitary conditions, Ireland was now freer from cattle disease than it used to be. The House would hardly credit the great extent of the importation of Canadian cattle to the North of Scotland. The trade began in 1887, with only 700 cattle; but in 1890 the importation had risen to 20,000 head of cattle. Dundee and Newcastle followed in the trade, and in one year 183,000 head of Canadian cattle were introduced into the country. The animals were well-bred, and came from a climate which was specially suited to their growing and thriving in Scotland. The business paid the farmers well. He was bound to say that he had always regretted the small farmers in Aberdeenshire and the North generally did not breed more store cattle. They were told that these Canadian cattle lowered the quality of Aberdeenshire beef. There was no doubt that the highest quality of beef in Aberdeenshire was fed up from the best stock; but, in his opinion, if the Canadian store cattle fed in Aberdeenshire were fairly well-bred and well-handled they would run the first-class beef in the London market very closely indeed. The only effect of excluding them would be to increase the competition from abroad. There was no doubt that a great many of our home-fed animals were now very much affected with tuberculosis, which he feared had now got a very firm hold on cattle in the

country. It had been suggested—and the suggestion was not a bad one—that if their breeders were to breed from clean Canadian animals, coming from a country where there was not and never had been any tuberculosis, and where, he believed, there was no pleuro-pneumonia, they would introduce into their flocks and herds fresh blood, which might go a considerable way towards eradicating tuberculosis. He hoped the House would reject the Motion. He did not propose to move the Amendment on the Paper, but merely to move a simple negative to the Motion before the House. He believed that the Motion, if carried, would raise the price of animal food to the people of the country, lower the quality of beef, and hamper seriously, and depress still more, a greatly depressed industry.

\*Mr. J. LENG (Dundee) said, he would like to know the real motive for the submission of this very drastic Motion. It had been admitted that for years the cattle in Ireland were suspected of having introduced pleuro-pneumonia into Great Britain. What would have been thought if, on the first occasion that such an outbreak occurred, it had been proposed that no Irish cattle landed at Liverpool or Glasgow should be allowed to leave the wharf alive? The hon. Member for South Antrim had spoken as if there had been several outbreaks of pleuro-pneumonia last September, whereas there had only been two such outbreaks, which originated with two cargoes of Canadian cattle. To the present moment it was a disputable question whether it was pleuro-pneumonia or not on those occasions. He admitted that the Board of Agriculture had emphatically declared that it was pleuro-pneumonia, but that conclusion had been disputed. Without entering into controversial matter, he thought there was some cause to complain that the Board of Agriculture was not willing to submit to the scientific tests to which the hon. Member for West Aberdeenshire had alluded. The hon. Mover had attributed the views of Scotch Members on this matter to local considerations, but he thought the retort might be made that the solicitude of the hon. Member for the health of cattle in Scotland was attributable to his desire that Canadian cattle should not come in conflict with the trade in Irish cattle.

The healthiest cattle in Scotland were those brought from Canada. They benefited by the sea voyage; they weighed more, and were in better condition on their arrival in this country than when they were placed on board ship at Montreal. If they asked 99 out of 100 Scotch agriculturists what their experience was, they would declare that these Canadian cattle, the moment they were put into the field, had a good appetite, fattened rapidly, and could be sent to market sooner and in a better condition than a corresponding number of Irish cattle. Not only for feeding purposes, but for breeding purposes they were most useful. It was found that it led to an improvement of the stock to cross with these Canadian cattle. In these times, when they heard so much of agricultural depression and of dullness of trade, it was somewhat remarkable that the hand raised to deal a blow against an important branch of agriculture in Scotland was the hand of hon. Gentlemen on the other side. He would like to point out to them that it was not simply a question of the cattle feeders; there were landed proprietors in Forfarshire and the adjacent counties who had spent large sums in this direction. Besides, if they stopped this branch of business they would seriously affect a large number of people and diminish their means of occupation. Then, as his hon. Friend the Member for West Aberdeenshire had said, they would not, by adopting this Resolution, really affect the supply of meat coming to their markets. The vessels which now brought live animals would in future bring cargoes of dead meat. But they would have destroyed an important branch of Scottish agriculture and Scottish enterprise, and an important branch of shipping would also be interfered with, for steamers had been specially built for the purpose, each costing £50,000. They were going to do all this in the interest of what was undoubtedly a revival of Protection. The men of the South were benighted on this question; they should look to the men of light and leading in the North. He was an Englishman, but he had lived 42 years in Scotland, and had learned during that time to admire the intelligence of the Scotch people. Why should they fetter them? He would warn hon. Members not to pursue

that course. Even if they were temporarily to succeed, they would find that the intelligence and enterprise of Scotland would ultimately vanquish them. If they should adopt this extraordinary Resolution, they would be doing injury and mischief to a class of deserving and intelligent men, and he cordially seconded the Amendment.

Mr. W. WHITE LAW (Perth) said, he held that this question was one of vital importance to the farmers and cattle dealers of the North and North-Eastern Counties of Scotland, and he did not apologise for raising his voice against the Resolution. Scotch farmers and Scotch capitalists last September stated that there was no convincing evidence that pleuro-pneumonia existed in Canada, or that cattle which were said to be suffering from the disease were in reality suffering from it. But they all admitted at once that when the Board of Agriculture called in certain veterinary advisers, and those advisers unanimously declared that certain cattle were suffering from a certain disease, the Board had no option but to prohibit the importation of such cattle. They did not complain of the steps taken by the Board last September, but they claimed that time had proved that pleuro-pneumonia did not exist in Canada. He believed that the Canadian authorities communicated with the authorities of this country, and requested them to join in an inquiry into the health of the Canadian cattle; but the authorities here did not see their way to joining them, and consequently the Canadian Government had had to make the inquiry themselves, and a Report had been laid before the Canadian Parliament declaring that there had not been a case of pleuro-pneumonia in the Dominion for several years past. Therefore, there was no ground for the fears that had been expressed with regard to the danger incurred here by the importation of Canadian cattle. But there was one other possibility which had been pointed out. The President of the Board of Agriculture had said that, although there might be no pleuro-pneumonia in Canada itself, it was quite possible that cattle were being imported into Canada from an infected area; but owing to the restrictions which had been imposed upon that importation, it was impossible that diseased cattle could pass through her

territory. Canada was now protected on all sides by a stringent Regulation which would prevent effectually the importation of cattle into Canada from infected areas. The Scotch cattle dealers and farmers demanded that the restriction should be taken off, for several reasons. They held that pleuro-pneumonia did not exist in Canada; and, further in Scotland they could not do without Canadian cattle, both for feeding and for breeding purposes. He was aware that English cattle breeders were of opinion that the importation of Canadian cattle was detrimental to their trade, but, on the other hand, Scotch breeders asserted that there was no better cross for breeding purposes than Canadian cattle. They held that the most dangerous of all cattle to import into Scotland were those from Yorkshire and from Ireland. He denied that this agitation in favour of the unrestricted importation of Canadian cattle had been got up by a few dealers, and by auctioneers and shipowners, and assured the House that it was the Scotch farmers themselves who were in favour of the abolition of all restrictions upon the trade. He sincerely hoped the House would reject the Resolution, and that the Government would shortly remove the restrictions altogether.

**MR. HERBERT GARDNER:** Before I answer some of the speeches made this evening, I should like, in the first place, to say that I recognise that agriculture has been for some years suffering from depression, and that that depression is probably accentuated and sharper at the present moment than it has been heretofore. But in that depression there has always been one bright spot, and that has been the healthiness, and the increasing healthiness, of our flocks and herds. The Mover of the Motion has already pointed out the great decrease there has been in the number of outbreaks of disease in this country since what I regard as beneficial legislation was first passed by this House in 1878. I think no one can deny the exceeding benefit that these Acts have been to the agricultural classes generally, nor that they have saved very probably millions of money by their beneficial operation. That being the case, I am the very last man in the world to deny that; whilst it is at all times of the greatest importance that the Government

of the day should exercise the utmost caution in order to guard our flocks and herds from disease, whether native or imported, at the present moment they are doubly bound not to relax by one jot or tittle their efforts in this direction, but to do everything in their power to prevent the importation of disease from abroad. Having said so much, it is my duty to consider very closely, and to invite the House to consider, what the Resolution of the hon. Gentleman really means. There certainly seems to have been some doubt in the House on the subject, because I find that the hon. and learned Member for Deptford is absolutely going to vote in favour of the Resolution, because he considers it will facilitate the importation of foreign animals at Deptford. I should like to know whether that is the opinion of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Sleaford, who lately presided over the Department I have the honour to represent, and who, I understand, is going to vote for this Resolution. As I read the Resolution, there is no reference to foot-and-mouth disease, and I think the Member for Sleaford would be the last person in the world to agree with the hon. and learned Member for Deptford that it would be to the advantage of this country that animals coming from countries where foot-and-mouth disease is suspected to exist, or does exist, should be allowed to land at Deptford and be slaughtered at that port. I should like to know if that is the right hon. Gentleman's interpretation of the Resolution? The right hon. Gentleman knows that by the Act of 1884, in the case of foot-and-mouth disease, it is distinctly laid down that no animals coming from countries infected, or reasonably suspected of being infected with the foot-and-mouth disease, shall be allowed to be imported to this country, and certainly not brought here to be slaughtered at the ports, but the hon. Member for Deptford seems to think that the effect of the Resolution will be to allow that to be done. When the House examines the Resolution closely, I think they will find it is a most drastic and stringent measure. The hon. Gentleman is not content with the law as it stands. He is not satisfied to leave the matter to the limited and definite discretion of the President of the Board of Agriculture for the time being; he is not content to know that

when disease exists in another country, or when there is reasonable suspicion that it may be imported from that country, the Act, as it stands, absolutely compels the Minister to prohibit the importation of cattle from that country. I think the present system as it exists has certainly been a sensible system. It is a system which can be modified as the circumstances and interests of this country demand, and it is certainly a system which we all ought to support. But the hon. Gentleman opposite does not like the system. He wants to prohibit for ever all foreign importation from whatever country, whether it is suspected of disease or not, and to enact that we are to draw a sort of brazen wall of Protection round our coasts, and without any appeal, except by the somewhat laborious process of Acts of Parliament, to deprive our farmers for all time of the benefit they may derive from the free importation of cattle from foreign countries. I think the House will perceive that is a very serious proposition, and one which ought to be very carefully considered. This is not the first time that this especial proposition has been brought before the House and decided. The proposition of the Member for South Antrim, with a very small exception, was practically the proposal of the Government in their Bill which they brought in in 1878. That Bill was brought in by a Conservative Ministry and supported by a Conservative majority. It was introduced into the House of Lords by the Duke of Richmond, who was then Lord President of the Council. The Bill was referred to a Select Committee, and when that Committee examined witnesses and experts brought before it they decided at once that with regard to North America discretion should be left to the Privy Council.

**MR. CHAPLIN:** What Committee?

**MR. GARDNER:** The Select Committee appointed by the House of Lords to consider the Bill of 1878. This measure of 1878 came down to this House and was debated for four nights; and on going into Committee Sir Selwin Ibbetson, who was the Member of the Conservative Party in charge of the Bill, proposed on behalf of the Government that several European countries free from disease should also, as well as North

America, be left to the discretion of the Privy Council. What happened then? On going into Committee my right hon. and learned Friend the Member for Bury (Sir H. James) moved a proviso to Clause 1 to the effect that no Order of the Privy Council should be valid if its operation should be inconsistent with the obligations existing under any commercial Treaty for the time being. This raised a very long Debate in the House, and the subject most prominently brought before the House was what is known as the Most Favoured Nation Clause, the object being to show it was not justifiable to differentiate by Statute in the manner proposed, such action being an infraction of our Treaty obligations. Eventually the Conservative Government gave way all along the line, and the Bill of 1878 was framed on the lines on which we at the present moment administer these Acts. The House will thus see that this is not the first time this subject has been brought forward. When it was brought forward in 1878, with all the authority of the Conservative Party and backed by a Conservative majority, Parliament in its wisdom declared the course proposed to be undesirable, and unhesitatingly condemned it. I want to know from the Mover of the Resolution what has happened since that decision was arrived at by a Conservative Government to make it necessary or expedient that we should alter the law as it was then ordained, and has existed during all this time? I want to ask him and his friends who support him why the present moment and this special time is the psychological moment for bringing it forward?

**MR. MACARTNEY:** This is the first opportunity I could get.

**MR. GARDNER:** I can hardly think seriously the hon. Gentleman waited until the four diseased animals had come from Canada, and restrictions have been put on in that case. He has sat in the House for the last six years, during the whole of which time his political friends (the Conservatives) have been in power, and why did he never urge this proposition, so beneficial and so desirable in his opinion, when his own friends were in power, and when he would have had an opportunity of carrying it into effect? I am bound to draw only one conclusion from

that fact, and that is, the Resolution is meant to be a censure on the conduct of the Agricultural Department during the short time I have been in office.

MR. MACARTNEY: I do not want to interrupt the right hon. Gentleman, but my reason for bringing on the Resolution was in consequence of the Resolution arrived at by the Royal Agricultural Society of England embodying the opinions of the agriculturists.

MR. GARDNER: I should like to ask the Royal Agricultural Society and the Central Chamber of Agriculture why this is the psychological moment and why they did not bring it forward during the last six years? I can explain it on very high authority. The reason is that so long as a Conservative Government is in power these gentlemen think the interests of agriculture are perfectly safe. [*Opposition cheers.*] I thought I should elicit that cheer, and I may say they had very high authority for that cheer and opinion, because in the Debates in the House of Lords in 1878 Lord Salisbury said—

"They must have a fixed policy. They all had confidence in his noble Friend the Lord President of the Privy Council, and if they could pass an Act of Parliament that he should live for ever, and hold Office for ever, no doubt all would be right, and there would be no necessity for their enacting a fixed policy. But since they could insert neither of these provisions they must take precautions that their policy must not be the caprice of the Executive Government in power."

That was the policy of the Conservative Party at that time and is at the present time. If the House of Commons could pass an Act that the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Sleaford should have a perennial existence—which I and all his friends in this House wish he could have, and could remain a sort of perpetual Pope of Agriculture, why then, Sir, I do not suppose there would be any question of Resolutions being brought forward. But, however much that may be the opinion of the Party opposite on that question, that is not our opinion, and I do not think it is the opinion, of the country generally. But, Sir, I do not think the hon. Gentleman opposite has quite studied the law as it stands. By the present Act you have what Lord Salisbury said he desired—a fixed policy. If hon. Members take the trouble to read the Act they will find, as

the Attorney General pointed out, that it is compulsory and not permissive on the Board of Agriculture. I always held that was what this Act meant; and when the Canadian business arose last autumn, I took the opinion of the highest legal authorities in the land, and they arrived at the conclusion that it was compulsory on the President of the Board of Agriculture, by the Act, to impose restriction in regard to cattle when he felt any reasonable suspicion existed that disease was prevalent in the country from which they were imported. It would, therefore, be very hard for anyone in responsible office at the Board of Agriculture to alter the policy or not to enforce the restriction when it became necessary to do so, and I do not think the hon. Member opposite need be under any fear either as to the fixity or continuity of what I hold to be the beneficial operation of the Act in regard to preventing disease in our flocks and herds. It has been said that the Member for South Antrim brought forward this Resolution in the interests of Ireland. I do not believe that for a single moment, and for this reason: the hon. Gentleman knows as well as we do that Ireland was specially exempted in that Act of 1878. We do not look upon Ireland as a foreign country, and we do believe it to be part of the United Kingdom. That being the case, I do not see what reason there is for the hon. Gentleman to suspect that there is any question of Ireland being concerned in the matter, because whatever happens I hope we shall always consider that Ireland shall be treated in the same way. Now, Sir, with regard to the cost which has been alluded to by the Mover of the Resolution. He tried to make out that the cost of this special business, with regard to pleuro-pneumonia and other attacks, was so great that this House ought to adopt this measure in order to protect the impoverished taxpayer being mulcted in an enormous manner, as he was likely to be. In the first place, I would point out to the hon. Gentleman that his estimate of the cost of that particular matter is entirely wrong. It is perfectly true that £21,285 was the original sum paid for compensation, but the hon. Gentleman forgets that from salvage we received a sum of £8,860, so that the real cost of the outbreak amounted to the sum of £12,630. I

Mr. Gardner

understand the hon. Gentleman to say what an enormous sum this is to pay for four animals, and that, practically, the country is asked to pay £3,000 apiece for four animals imported from Canada. That is not the state of the case at all. The hon. Gentleman must look back to what has happened in the past—to the number of animals which have been imported into this country without pleuro-pneumonia at all. The hon. Gentleman said that pleuro-pneumonia was not indigenous, but had been imported. Will he be surprised to learn that, with the exception of these four cases, not one single case of pleuro-pneumonia which has occurred since the Board of Agriculture has taken over the duties of the Privy Council has ever been traced to an imported animal? The four cases to which he alluded were the only cases which have occurred. Therefore, that is not the proper way of looking at it, and you ought to distribute that sum of £12,000 over all the animals imported into this country for the benefit of this country for the last 10 or 12 years. We have had 821,325 cattle imported from Canada into this country, without one single case of pleuro-pneumonia until the other day; and if you divide the £12,000 among all these cattle, I do not think it comes to a very large sum, so that I say the argument of the hon. Gentleman as regards that falls to the ground. There is one argument which I wish to use before I sit down, and I know when I do state it I shall be met with laughter, and probably denial, by hon. Gentlemen opposite. This Resolution, Sir, is a protective measure, and we in this country are Free Traders, and we mean to remain a Free Trade country. No one in his senses can surely deny that the total prohibition of the entry of live cattle from foreign countries must be a measure of protective tendency. It may be what the Americans call incidental Protection; but whether you call it incidental Protection, or whether Protection pure and simple, it is obviously a measure which in its direction is opposed to Free Trade. Moreover, it is also opposed to the best interests of Protection, because, by letting in the dead meat, as you propose to do, and excluding the store cattle, as you propose to do, you are practically encouraging the admission of the manu-

factured article—that is, the dead meat—and you are excluding the raw material—that is, the store cattle—which the graziers of England, Scotland, and elsewhere are anxious to work up into the manufactured article. So long as I hold the office which I do at the present moment, I am determined to do my utmost to protect the flocks and herds from the importation of disease; but I am equally determined to oppose any measure which in any form deprives the people of this country from the benefits of competition, whether in their own country or abroad. I should like to say one word on Canada, and I will say it very briefly. The House knows that during last autumn it was the misfortune of the Government to be obliged to prohibit the landing of live cattle from Canada. We arrived at that conclusion after much consideration, and on the authoritative and unanimous opinion of the best veterinary authorities of the day; and, Sir, when we did so, we did so with the utmost regret. We shall welcome the first opportunity that occurs to us of taking off these restrictions with regard to Canada. But, Sir, what does the Resolution of the hon. Gentleman mean? If it is not a protective measure, if it is not a censure on my Department, what is it? It is aimed at Canada, and Canada alone. It is quite obvious that at the present moment there is only one country, and that is Canada, with regard to which there would be any opportunity of taking off the restrictions. In Europe foot-and-mouth disease is prevalent; in the United States constant cases of pleuro-pneumonia render it impossible for us to allow them to send cattle here. But in regard to Canada, if we are thoroughly assured that that country is free from disease, and adopting proper measures for preventing the introduction of disease, we should gladly welcome the opportunity of taking off the restrictions. That does not seem to be the opinion of hon. Gentlemen opposite. This Resolution is aimed at Canada, and Canada alone. That is an unfortunate point. Canada is one of our most loyal colonies; this trade is of the utmost importance to Canada, and of the greatest advantage to Scotland; and if the Resolution does not mean what I say, hon. Gentlemen can have brought it forward for one purpose, and one purpose



alone—and that is, to prevent the taking off the restrictions as regards Canada when the time arrives. I think this is an unfortunate Motion to have been brought forward by the Conservative Party, and to be supported officially by the Conservative Front Bench. Hon. Gentlemen opposite think, I believe, that they are very soon about to return to Office. I do not offer any opinion on that subject, and all I can say is this : that if this Resolution be directed against Canada, and Canada alone, I do not envy their Colonial Minister, whoever he may be. I think I have shown the House that this Resolution is objectionable and inopportune, and I strongly hope it will be rejected by a large majority.

MR. CHAPLIN : Mr. Speaker, at the risk of being taken for a benighted Southerner by the hon. Gentleman the Member for Dundee, I am afraid it will be my duty to support the Motion which the Member for Antrim has submitted with so much ability to the House. And, in the first place, I should like to be allowed to say that so far from regarding this as a Motion of Censure upon the administration of the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Gardner), I do not think there is a single gentleman, on this side of the House, at all events, and I doubt whether there is on that, except the right hon. Gentleman himself, into whose head the idea could have entered for a single moment. If the right hon. Gentleman had been Minister of Agriculture for the Dominion of Canada the speech to which the House had just listened would have been appropriate in the extreme ; but the right hon. Gentleman appeared to forget that charity begins at home. He says this is a protective Motion. It is a protective Motion in the same sense that vaccination is a protection against disease, and I trust the House will be unanimous in its opinion upon that point. The right hon. Gentleman asked me to place my interpretation upon the Motion, and he asked whether we agree with the hon. Member for Deptford. That hon. Gentleman was speaking in the interests of his own constituency ; and as Deptford was one of the ports of debarkation, it must greatly benefit by the passing of the Motion. The law presumes that no imported animal shall leave the wharf alive ; that all animals imported to this country shall be

slaughtered, and not allowed to go into the country at all ; but there is a discretion to make an exemption in favour of certain countries in certain conditions ; discretion and to make the law absolute, and what is desired is to remove the. When the right hon. Gentleman speaks of the raising of the question in 1878 I can tell him I recollect the matter perfectly, and the policy that was then agreed to. It was the exercise of the discretion existing now—it was the exercise of that in last September, in the case of four wretched animals from two wretched cargoes from Canada, that involved us in the risk of infecting the whole country, and that infected 79 districts in Scotland.

MR. GARDNER : There was no infection.

MR. CHAPLIN : Well, we were so liable to infection in this country that many animals had to be destroyed by the right hon. Gentleman's orders. Seventy-nine places were rendered liable to infection, and many animals had to be destroyed. The Motion would only carry one step further the policy which has been pursued for eight or 10 years with such beneficial results. In 1890 the control of this matter was taken out of the hands of the Local Authorities. In 1889 there were 474 outbreaks of disease ; in the succeeding years the numbers were 484, 192, 21 ; and in the present year none. And what has been the result of the adoption of this policy ? Why, that there has been a great increase in our flocks and herds, and a corresponding decrease in the price of meat. There is an increase of over 1,000,000 cattle and 4,000,000 sheep. And we have now arrived at a time when we are within measurable distance of being freed from pleuro-pneumonia altogether. We can hardly say that we are absolutely free yet. One peculiarity of the disease is that it may be dormant for even as long as two years ; and although we may appear to be free, we must not relax any precautions for a considerable period. One thing that is essential is that cattle should be slaughtered at the port of debarkation. In order to convey contagion there must be actual contact. There is no comparison to be made with cholera, because that disease manifests itself at once, and you can take what precautions you please. Thousands of

living animals have been passed by the veterinary surgeon, and found, when dead, to be infected with the disease. Before the Act of 1878 the principle on which the Government acted was to permit the free importation of all animals, except where they were known to be diseased; but since then a wiser policy has been adopted. I have pointed out the risk incurred by the unfortunate importation of Canadian animals. The country is not yet freed from that risk, and the time has now come when the Act should be repealed. The right hon. Gentleman may ask why these steps were not taken under the Conservative Government. I must bear my share of blame for having so long allowed Canadian animals to be imported. My great misgivings at the time prompted me to make frequent communications to the Canadian Government, but I always received the most positive assurances that Canada was free from the disease. But now the country has learnt what such assurances from foreign countries interested in the trade are worth. Similar assurances have over and over again been received from the United States; and the greatest pressure was put on me to admit cattle from the United States free. But, acting on the best advice, I always refused. The right hon. Gentleman has mentioned, in reply to my question about a month ago, 18 cargoes of cattle from the United States, in which 41 animals were found to be actually affected. How many hundred cattle in those cargoes were affected without being detected? The United States, was full of this disease, and with the length of frontier between Canada and the United States it is impossible to insure immunity for Canada. I say the risk is intolerable. There may be hundreds in a ship, and we should not know of them. I am afraid we are rather late in appealing to Canada—[Mr. Gardner was about to rise.] I hope the right hon. Gentleman will do me the favour of listening to my argument. How are we going to say, if we admit animals from Canada, on the plea that disease does not prevail in that country—how can we say that those animals are not taken from across the United States frontier, where the disease does prevail? How can we tell whether an animal has crossed from one country into another? Then, Sir, I say that a great many gentlemen hold

with me, that after all the exertions and sacrifices that have been made to get rid of the disease here, we ought to do everything in our power to prevent its return. The only effectual way of doing that is by making the law for the slaughter of imported animals universal, subject to the exceptions dealt with in the Motion. I have heard only two objections to the Motion. One was that it would interfere with trade. I should be sorry to interfere with the trade with Canada; but the interests of our own country must be considered first. There are farmers in the North who object to the proposed measures, but their interests should give way to the general good, and they will really suffer no material injury, because Irish stock was never more plentiful or cheaper. It is also directly to the interests of the consumer that the Motion should be carried. The worst thing for the consumer is that the animals should come into the country perfectly free and be sold when the market is most advantageous for selling them. As far as the consumer is concerned, it is infinitely more to his advantage that the Motion should be accepted than rejected by the House of Commons. With the exception of a limited number of farmers in the North, I believe that nine out of every 10 agriculturists in the country are heartily in favour of the Motion. On every ground—on the ground of obtaining complete freedom from disease, on the ground of the interests of nine out of 10 farmers in the country, on the ground of the interests of the Irish breeders of stock, and, above all, in the interests of the consumers, I have no hesitation—on the contrary, I have the greatest pleasure—in giving my hearty support to the Motion.

Question put.

The House divided :—Ayes 151 ; Noes 186.—(Division List, No. 22.)

MUNICIPAL CORPORATIONS ACT (1882)  
AMENDMENT BILL.—(No. 159.)

COMMITTEE.

Bill considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Clause 1.

MR. T. P. O'CONNOR (Liverpool, Scotland) said, he would appeal to the Government to consider whether there

could not be engrafted on this Bill an Amendment which would deal with many grievous cases in Ireland, where the minority of the population was deprived of representation on Municipal Corporations? He was glad to think that the hon. Member in charge of the Bill was in sympathy with them. It would be well to defer the Bill for a day or two.

\***THE CHAIRMAN** : The hon. Gentleman is not entitled to raise that question. He must do it at some other stage, or in some other way. At present the Question before the House is Clause 1.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Chairman do report Progress, and ask leave to sit again."—(*Dr. Tanner.*)

Motion agreed to.

Committee report Progress; to sit again To-morrow.

**POOR LAW UNION OFFICERS (IRELAND) SUPERANNUATION BILL.**

On Motion of Mr. T. W. Russell, Bill to make better provision for the Superannuation of the Officers of Poor Law Unions in Ireland, ordered to be brought in by Mr. T. W. Russell, Mr. O'Connor, Mr. Farquharson, Mr. Justin M'Carthy, and Mr. John Redmond.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 249.]

**MEDICAL CHARITIES LAW AMENDMENT BILL.**

On Motion of Mr. T. W. Russell, Bill to amend the Medical Charities Acts, ordered to be brought in by Mr. T. W. Russell, Sir Edward Harland, Dr. Farquharson, and Mr. Justin M'Carthy.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 250.]

**TRAMWAYS AND PUBLIC COMPANIES (IRELAND) ACT, 1883, AMENDMENT BILL.**

On Motion of Mr. Tully, Bill to amend "The Tramways and Public Companies (Ireland) Act, 1883," ordered to be brought in by Mr. Tully, Sir Thomas Esmonde, Mr. Knox, Mr. Maurice Healy, Mr. P. A. M'Hugh, and Mr. Edward Barry.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 251.]

**SUFFOLK COUNTY COUNCIL COMMITTEE BORROWING POWERS BILL.**

Select Committee nominated of,—Sir Walter Foster, Mr. Quilter, and Mr. Francis Stevenson, with Two to be appointed by the Committee of Selection.—(*Mr. Francis Stevenson.*)

*Mr. T. P. O'Connor*

**ARCHITECTS' REGISTRATION BILL.**

On Motion of Mr. Atherley-Jones, Bill to provide for the Registration of Architects, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Atherley-Jones, Mr. Justin M'Carthy, and Mr. Coddington.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 252.]

**MINING EASEMENTS BILL.**

On Motion of Mr. Atherley-Jones, Bill to provide for fixing a fair rent in respect of Way-leaves and other Mining Easements, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Atherley-Jones, Mr. Joicey, Mr. Joseph Pease, Mr. John Wilson, and Mr. Fenwick.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 253.]

**REFORMATORY SCHOOLS (SCOTLAND) BILL.—(No. 202.)**

Considered in Committee, and reported, without Amendment; to be read the third time To-morrow.

**STATUTE LAW REVISION.**

Lords Message [28th February] communicating the following Resolution, namely,

"That it is desirable that all Statute Law Revision Bills of the present Session be referred to a Joint Committee of both Houses of Parliament," considered.

Resolved, That this House doth concur with the Lords in the said Resolution.

Ordered, That a Message be sent to the Lords to acquaint them therewith.—(*Mr. Marjoribanks.*)

**SEAMEN'S PROVISIONS BILL.—(No. 191.)**

Read a second time, and committed for Tuesday next.

**GOVERNMENT OF IRELAND BILL, 1893 (CONSTITUENCIES).**

Copy ordered—

"Of Return showing, as regards the First Schedule to the Government of Ireland Bill, 1893, the Population, total Rateable Value, number of Ratings valued over £20, and number of Councillors returnable to the Legislative Council; and, as regards the Second Schedule, the Population, total Rateable Value, number of Registered Electors, and the present and future number of Members for the House of Commons returnable by Ireland."—(*Mr. John Morley.*)

Copy presented accordingly; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. (No. 104.)

House adjourned at a quarter after Twelve o'clock.

## HOUSE OF COMMONS,

*Wednesday, 8th March 1893.**PRIVATE BUSINESS.*LONDON AND SOUTH-WESTERN RAIL-  
WAY BILL (*by Order*).

## SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

Motion made, and Question proposed,  
“That the Bill be now read a second time.”

\*MR. A. C. MORTON (Peterborough) :  
I do not propose to trouble the House as regards the rates and charges of this railway, because I understand they have given way—and given way more readily than some other Companies—and I desire to give them credit for it. However, I may leave that till later on to see if they comply with the wishes of the agriculturists and traders of the country. I have another complaint to make against this Company, and that is as regards the accommodation given to third-class passengers. I, of course, do not desire to divide on the matter to-day, and I am only calling attention to it as a warning to the Railway Company. Last year I called attention to a similar matter in connection with the South-Eastern Company, who, however, did not take much notice of that warning, as their third-class passengers are treated as badly as ever. Some day, if Railway Companies do not do what is right and fair with regard to their third-class passengers, they will find the Radical and Democratic Party strong enough in this House to throw out their Bills regardless of any consequences whatever. Everyone knows, who studies the reports and balance-sheets of the Railway Companies, that they make their profits out of third-class passengers. In past times they used to treat these passengers like cattle, but the better they treated them the more profit they made out of them, so that in asking them to do what is right and proper with regard to third-class passengers, one is not asking them to lose money by them. With re-

gard to this particular Company, I have myself on several occasions noticed five, six, or seven first and second-class carriages almost empty, whilst the two or three third-class carriages were so crowded that the people were packed like herrings in a barrel. Why cannot the Company get more third-class carriages and give their third-class passengers plenty of room? That would cost them no more. The Companies on the north side of the Thames—such as the London and North-Western, the Great Northern, the Midland, the Great Western, and even the Great Eastern, treat their third-class passengers much better than the lines on the southern side of the Thames. I notice that the South-Western Railway Company are putting on a very luxurious train from Southampton to London. This, probably, will not pay, and the third-class passengers in other trains will be called upon to pay for the loss. This matter has been seriously considered by those who are compelled to travel in third-class carriages, and as time goes on they will certainly call on their Representatives in this House who grant these monopolies to see that justice is done to the third-class passengers. I hope, therefore, that, without having recourse to throwing out a Private Bill which may have many good things in it, this Company will do what the Companies on the northern side of the Thames have done, to a large extent, with regard to their third-class passengers, and give them better accommodation, and treat them as they ought to be treated. I hope that the fact of attention having been called to the matter will induce this Company to do something speedily in that direction, and in that hope I beg for the present to withdraw my notice of opposition to this Bill.

MR. J. S. WALLACE (Tower Hamlets, Limehouse) : I do not desire to detain the House by going over the ground which has already been covered by my hon. Friend. I have, however, been requested to speak here on behalf of the third-class passengers, who complain of the overcrowding of the carriages of this Company, insufficiency of light, and want of cleanliness in the compartments. I think it desirable to draw the attention of the Company to these three

matters in the hope that they will be remedied.

Motion agreed to..

Bill read a second time, and committed.

# RATING OF MACHINERY BILL.—(No. 1.)

## SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

\*MR. HOLLAND (Salford, N.), in moving the Second Reading of the Bill, said, it was identical with the Bill which had already been thoroughly and carefully discussed in that House, and which, as the result of thorough and careful discussion, was carried a year ago by the enormous majority of two to one. He noticed that within the last few weeks two deputations had waited upon the President of the Local Government Board—one a very large and influential deputation in favour of the measure, and the other, not so large, in opposition to it. At the second deputation one of the speakers complained that the Bill was constantly cropping up in the House of Commons, and stated that, no matter how often it was defeated, it was brought forward again and again. When they recollected that in 1892 the voting was 122 against the Bill and 232 in its favour; that in 1891 the Bill—or a similar one—was carried without a Division, and that in 1890 there were 87 votes against and 239 in favour of the measure, he thought if that was a record of defeat they might well hope that the Bill would be similarly defeated on the present occasion. Coming as he did from one of the great manufacturing centres of the North, he could testify that the course of this Bill year by year had created the intensest interest; and if there were not so many Petitions this year in its favour as they had a year ago, it was because not the slightest effort had been made to prepare the Petitions and present them to the House. There were some objections to the measure, which, he thought, were founded on a misconception of the Bill. It was urged as an objection that they wished to relieve manufacturers from the payment of rates, but in his judgment the main object of the Bill was to leave matters just as they now stood; and if the rates were left as they stood at present, it was difficult to discover how increased

hardships would be inflicted on any section of ratepayers. He thought he had a right to repudiate the idea that they wished to exempt machinery from rating. The Bill proposed to do nothing of the kind. What it aimed at doing was the prevention of the over-rating of machinery. If he thought for a moment that the Bill was intended to exempt manufacturers from their just burdens, he should wipe his hands of it. By the present practice in the great majority of Unions, manufacturers already contributed substantially to the rates, not only on their buildings, but also on the machinery which provided the motive power. The Bill did not seek to interfere with this. Manufacturers sought only what was fair, and many of them thought that this Bill was fair. In support of that opinion he would refer the House to the practice in Scotland and Ireland, where rates were not levied upon this particular class of tenants' machinery with which this Bill proposed to deal. Many in that House desired to extend the area of rating as far as possible. He had strong sympathy with that policy, but he was in favour of carrying it out in a comprehensive and systematic way, and not of singling out such machinery as the Bill indicated. In the textile trades it was the practice of owners to let off tenements and supply steam power, the tenants supplying machinery and removing it when the tenancy expired. The tenant also supplied tools, and, of course, removed them also when leaving. Those articles came under the head of personalty, and the practice had been to rate realty and not personalty. Now, the machinery and tools mentioned and used in connection with these trades with which they were dealing were, and ought to be, classed as personalty. He did not think there could be any doubt on the part of the House that they were personalty; but whether there was or not, it was a fact that valuers for Probate had no doubt on the subject, for they included them as personalty and charged Death Duties accordingly. He would not attempt to discuss fine legal points, or to say what was the value of this or that legal decision. It was sufficient to know that the law was uncertain, and that, when the law was uncertain, legislation was inevitable. The existing condition of things

might be agreeable to lawyers out of work—he did not suppose there were any of them in that House—but the general public looked at the matter in a different light. The real aim of the Bill was to prevent the decisions that had been given from applying to all the Unions throughout the country. They could not tax machinery without at the same time taxing those who got a livelihood by that machinery. The objections came from the agricultural districts; and if it were a fact that the provisions of the Bill would add to the burdens already falling on those districts, then he would be prepared to admit that the opposition would be justified. But how was that possible, seeing that the effect of the Bill would be to make no change in 19-20ths of the Unions of the country? No doubt, if the Bill were passed—as he hoped it would be—it might affect the rating in about a dozen Unions; but, on the other hand, if it were rejected, the rateable value of certain manufacturing districts would be very considerably increased; a fatal blow would be struck at many industries, and the army of the unemployed would be greatly increased. The rates that would be affected by the passing of the Bill were merely local; those that would be affected by its rejection were Imperial, so that whatever alterations were made in one locality would not affect, or would only affect in a very slight degree, other localities. Had it been a question of Imperial taxes rather than local rates the case would have been otherwise. There were some who objected to the measure on the ground that it would relieve the manufacturer and impose additional charges on the small property owners and on the small shopkeepers; but, in his judgment, there would be greater suffering among these last-named classes if the Bill were rejected, for the increase of rating would be such that many manufacturers would be compelled to close their works, and workpeople would be thrown idle, with the result that the small property-owners and the shopkeepers would suffer. The rejection of the Bill, they thus saw, was likely to inflict greater injury on the interests of those classes. It had been asked again and again whether the machinery in connection with collieries would be subject to additional charges; but he maintained, with the original pro-

moters of the Bill, that the measure would not effect the smallest change in the manner of levying rates in that respect. At present there were rates on engines and boilers. That was the kind of machinery that they proposed to continue to rate. The manufacturer had keen competition and high tariffs to meet, and it would be easy for him to transfer his capital from one country to another if he were threatened with serious burdens of taxation and rating. But he believed the British manufacturer did not want the bribe of protection that existed in other countries. He would rather stay in the old country and employ British labour and pay his fair share of the rates. Nothing less, and nothing more. The Bill now before them was exactly the Bill that was introduced a year ago. It was a great length of time since the subject had been first brought forward in the House, and it had been dealt with from year to year up to last year. Any alterations that had been made in the Bill were alterations suggested during the discussions that took place in the House, so that the Bill now before them was the outcome of the discussion and consideration that had been devoted to the subject. The Assessment Committees throughout the country were strongly in favour of the proposals, and they were most anxious that the House should agree to the Second Reading that day, as the measure would be a guidance to them in the assessments which they had to make. He was sure the gentlemen composing these Committees would be regarded as absolutely impartial authorities in the matter, and they declared that the Bill would be a fair and reasonable settlement, and that they hoped and expected it would pass. The Representatives of the Government and of the Front Opposition Bench could, from their experience, understand the weight of authority that such an opinion carried with it, and they would acknowledge, he had no doubt, that the Bill provided all that was required. If the House did not accept the Bill a great injustice would have been done to the industries of the country, for, as he had shown, the application of the law was very unequal, and it was a case in which the majority should be allowed to settle the matter. Out of a total of some 652 Unions to which circulars had been sent out, he

found that 435 had made no alteration in the rating, 11 were for including all machinery, 15 were for including a portion of the machinery, and 191 had sent no replies. He had said that only about a dozen places would be affected to any extent if this Bill were passed. Birmingham would be affected to the extent of £16,000; Gateshead to the extent of £8,000. That would be the effect if the Bill were passed; but if it were rejected, then one Union alone—that of Oldham—would have its rateable value in mills and works increased by £325,000—namely, from £270,000 to £595,000. How did that compare with the small sums by which Birmingham and Gateshead would be affected? He fancied there were hon. Gentlemen who would not wish to see such an increase as he had indicated. In another district—that of Bolton—there would be an increase in its mill assessments on the rejection of the Bill from £110,000 to £235,000. Was that fair to Bolton? He might quote some of the instances which had been given to the President of the Board of Trade the other day by a deputation which waited upon him. In one case a firm was mentioned as paying at the present time £3,000 weekly in wages. If this Bill were rejected, the works would probably be closed, and these thousands would no longer be available for the workpeople. If necessary, he could go through many illustrations in connection with the measure. There was the case of that vast and unfortunate labour dispute in the cotton trade. He believed there were 200,000 workpeople affected, directly or indirectly, and the dispute was brought about by the employers proposing a reduction of 5 per cent. in the wages of those whom they employed. If this Bill were rejected, might it not be made an excuse for a further reduction—amounting, perhaps, in all to 10 per cent.? They knew from experience that there was a very distinct tendency, when the margin of profit had disappeared, to attack the item of wages, and to diminish the rates of payment. It would be in the recollection of the House that in the Debate on the Address in reply to Her Majesty's Speech they had under consideration the question of the unemployed. No more momentous question could be submitted to the House. He would again remind the House that by rejecting the Bill it would

add to, and not diminish, the army of the unemployed. By the rejection of the Bill, too, they would give the signal for revolutionary changes in the assessment of the country. The Bill was of the greatest importance to industries that contributed so much to the greatness of the Empire, and he hoped it would pass the Second Reading that day, and that it would soon become the law of the land.

MR. GERALD W. BALFOUR (Leeds, Central) said, he hoped the hon. Member who had proposed the Second Reading would not infer from the many vacant seats on that (the Conservative) side of the House that the Party with which he (Mr. Balfour) was associated did not take an interest in this measure. It was well understood that the absence of the majority of his friends on those Benches was due to an important meeting which was going on elsewhere, and the fact that they were not indifferent to the Bill was shown by this: that he had risen to second the Motion of the hon. Member who had just spoken. He had come there that afternoon because the Bill was one in which he took somewhat of the interest of a father, for it was in reality the same Bill as he had introduced last year from the other side of the House. The supporters of the Bill would not require to extend their speeches to any great length, for what their opinions were had been adequately and ably stated by the hon. Member opposite. They would find many considerations to convince them that this Bill ought to be read a second time. The Bill did not propose to introduce any change, but rather to avert a change. It was singular in that respect among many Bills introduced into that House. It had been asserted that the Bill aimed at the transfer of the burdens that now rested on the backs of the manufacturers to the backs of the people. ["Hear, hear!"] An hon. Gentleman said "hear, hear!" but he could assure him that that was not the case. There was no intention to relieve the manufacturers at the expense of other people. All that was wanted was to prevent a revolutionary change which would inflict great hardship on the working classes of the country. The next consideration in favour of the Bill was that it was supported by the Assessment Committees all over the country

The Bill was introduced in the interests of the working classes. It might be said of the Assessment Committees that they had a special interest in the matter—that they wanted to prevent all rating of manufactures, but they had the curious fact that these Committees joined with the manufacturers and the trades or Unions in promoting the Bill. They saw them joining in deputations to the President of the Local Government Board asking him to give his support to the Bill. There was nothing that was being done by the one that was not being done by the other. What were the reasons for this singular union? There were two reasons: In the first place, the Assessment Committees wished to introduce an alteration which had been brought about in certain instances by what was known as the Chard case, which had increased the ratings to 100 and in some cases to 200 per cent. Was it surprising in such circumstances that the Committees were doing their best to alter the system? His hon. Friend had said that out of 600 or 700 Unions 435 had stated that they were still adhering to the system that was held to be the legal system of rating before the Tyne boiler case was decided, 11 had followed the ruling in the Chard case, whilst 15 had adopted that system, not wholly but in part. That was the second reason why Assessment Committees supported the Bill. They had to administer the law, and those who had to administer the law liked to know exactly what the law was. At present the law was uncertain. No doubt the latest decisions of the Judges were supposed to be an authoritative declaration of the law, but, at any rate, to the lay mind it was not advisable that their decisions should seem inconsistent and incompatible with previous decisions. He was not a lawyer himself, and he did not pretend to say whether that incompatibility was real or only apparent, but at least it was undesirable that it should exist, and he thought it would be to the advantage of all concerned that Parliament should take this opportunity of establishing once for all what the law was and what it was not. With regard to the latest ruling of the Judges, if the ruling given by Lord Esher on appeal in the Tyne boiler case—which was most clear—was to be carried out to its logical

conclusion, his impression was that either the rating claimed by the rating authority would not be the full rating to which Assessment Committees would be entitled, or it would be impossible to discover any adequate reason why they should exempt from rating even the furniture of an hotel. It was not merely that the law was uncertain, but it was also not uniform—the practice was not uniform. The law in England was not the same as the law in Scotland and the law in Ireland. The law in Scotland and Ireland corresponded to what was believed to be the law in England before the decision in the Tyne boiler case, and what the law would be again if this Bill were passed. To say the least of it, it was unfair that a burden should be placed upon the manufacturers in England from which the manufacturers in Ireland and Scotland were free. Again, as had been well stated by the Mover of the Second Reading, the practice differed in different parts of this country. In the district of Sunderland the ruling in the Chard case had long been the established practice. Birmingham again, if he might so say, in this matter was a law unto itself, and its system of rating was not only different from that which was established in the Sutherland district, but it was also different from that which was observed by the vast majority of the Assessment Committees all over the country. He was sorry not to see the hon. Member for Sunderland (Mr. Storey) in his place, and to learn that in all probability he would not be present to take part in the Debate. If he had been in his place no doubt he would have again told them that if they desired uniformity in the system of rating the proper way to secure it was for all the Assessment Committees in the country to conform to the law as it had been laid down by Lord Esher, the Master of the Rolls, and followed in Sunderland. Well, he (Mr. G. Balfour) quite understood the point of view of the hon. Member. Perhaps if he represented Sunderland he should take up the same position; but, in the meantime, it appeared to him a little unreasonable to contend that uniformity should be introduced by making the practice of nine-tenths of England conform to the practice of Sunderland, instead of making Sunderland conform to the practice of nine-tenths of England. For his (Mr. G. Balfour's) own part, he



considered that the action of the various Assessment Committees in declining to endeavour to establish uniformity by following the precedent of the Chard case, was fully justified by the recommendation of the Select Committee appointed to consider this question in 1887. The Report of that Committee was often referred to by the opponents of the Bill, because one of its recommendations was to the effect that this question of the rating of machinery should be dealt with not by itself, but as part of a whole comprehensive scheme of local taxation. Yes; but he did not know if opponents of the Bill would be equally ready to refer to another recommendation of the Committee. They further added

"That it is desirable, in the meantime, that the various rating authorities should not depart from the present system of assessment."

Therefore, the Assessment Committees had the authority of the Report of the Select Committee for the action they had taken in declining to depart from the system of assessment which they had hitherto observed. No doubt if there was the smallest prospect that the Government of the day would take up this question of rating and deal with it in a comprehensive fashion, they would be satisfied. But if they had to wait until the Government took up this very large, difficult, and thorny question, they would be in the position of the countryman who waited upon the river bank hoping that the water would all flow by. In the meantime, while they were waiting for that, they felt that they were entitled to ask Parliament to give a favourable consideration to this Bill. Year after year this Bill had been brought in and either passed without a Division or by an enormous majority, but year by year it had been engulfed in the quicksands which awaited any contentious Bill brought forward by a private Member. The President of the Local Government Board had not pronounced for or against the Bill, but to a deputation had given an assurance that if the Bill passed this Parliament, as it did last Parliament, the question would become one to which the Government might reasonably give facilities in the Committee stages. If the Bill passed—especially by a large majority—he (Mr. G. Balfour) hoped the Government would be prepared to give effect to this promise. The objections to

the Bill were raised from two quarters. In the first place, there was the objection which was urged from those urban districts which at present followed the principle laid down in the Chard case. If he might say so, they were the foxes who had lost their tails, and were anxious that other foxes should be placed in the same predicament. Here, again, he regretted the absence of the hon. Member for Sunderland, who had always been one of the chief exponents of the objection urged by these urban districts; but the hon. Member for Gateshead was in his place, and if this argument was to be represented again, it was to be hoped the hon. Gentleman would supply the place of the Member for Sunderland. It was said that the effect of the Bill would be to transfer the burden borne by the manufacturers to the artisans who were in their employment. There were two observations to make upon that. In the first place, in a large part of the country, though not in Sunderland, the Bill would introduce no change at all; and, secondly, the artisans themselves, as represented by their Trades Unions, did not agree in that particular view of their interests. It was possible, no doubt, that, if the principle laid down in the Chard case was to be the established principle of assessment prevailing all over the country, the effect would be that the rates would be lower by 2d. in the £1, and, therefore, that the home rate of the artisan would be reduced by, perhaps, 2s. 6d. in the year. He did not think it would be more than that. He would also assume that this 2s. 6d. went into the pocket of the artisan, and not into that of the landlord; yet he thought the artisan was perfectly right in holding that his interests would not suffer by this Bill, but would be promoted by it. The true interest of the artisan lay in the prosperity of the manufacturing industry of the country, and they would be more than repaid for any loss they might sustain by increased continuity of employment and increased wages. Now he passed to another objection—the objection which was urged by the agricultural interest. He hoped he should not be suspected of any want of sympathy with the agricultural classes in the depression from which they were now unfortunately suffering. He hoped he was assensible of that depression, and deplored

*Mr. Gerald W. Balfour*

it as much as any Member in the House; but he could not help thinking that the Representatives of the agricultural interest in that House greatly exaggerated the significance and importance of the Bill. How would it affect them? They might divide the rating districts into three classes—first, there were districts purely urban; secondly, districts purely agricultural; and, thirdly, districts which were partly urban and partly agricultural. Now, it was quite clear that the interests of agriculturists could not be injured by the Bill in urban districts, as they did not reside there, nor could they be injured by the provisions of the Bill in purely agricultural districts, because there was no machinery there; therefore, the only districts in which they could be injured were the third-class—namely, those districts in which the population was partly agricultural and partly industrial. He would ask this question of the classes interested in the cultivation of land, Was it really to their interest that the mills and factories now existing in their districts should be transferred to other districts, or perhaps closed altogether? Was it to their interest that the further development of mills and factories should be checked. For his own part, he could not believe that to be the interest even of the agricultural class in these mixed districts. In his opinion, it would be a short-sighted policy. In conclusion, he wished to say that he did not regard the Bill as one conceived in the interests of a small class; on the contrary, he considered it to be a Bill of public interest and of public importance. It could not be to the advantage of the community generally that the law should be uncertain and unequal. There was no doubt that if the Bill were passed it would produce greater uniformity in the law and reduce its ambiguity and make it more certain and more clear. If the Bill were successful in passing the Second Reading (and he spoke on behalf of gentlemen on both sides of the House who supported it), they would not insist upon every line of the Bill as it stood. They would be prepared to accept every Amendment, which would have the effect of defining more fully and more clearly the objects they had in bringing in the Bill. He begged to second the Motion for the Second Reading.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."—(*Mr. Holland.*)

SIR RICHARD H. PAGET (Somerset, Wells) also desired to express his regret for the enforced absence of the hon. Member for Sunderland, who had undertaken the duty of moving the rejection of the Bill. It fell to his (Sir R. Paget's) lot to undertake the task, and he did so, although he was aware the matter was one of considerable difficulty and intricacy. The Bill which had been advocated in speeches of marked ability would hardly be likely to prove a practical solution of the existing difficulty, advancing as it did the "wolf cum lamb" policy. The Report of the Select Committee had been inquired into. It was part of the case of those who advocated the Bill that the whole matter had been carefully considered by the Committee which sat for a long time, debated at length, and reported very briefly. That Committee reported that in their view it was important that there should be uniformity, and they recommended that the whole subject of rating should be dealt with comprehensively by the Government without the least possible delay. That was the case of the opponents of the Bill. They wanted a comprehensive Bill; they wanted it from the Government, and they wanted it without the least possible delay. The present Bill did not pretend to do anything in the nature of a settlement. It merely dealt with a very small fraction of a big question. The hon. Member for Central Leeds (Mr. G. Balfour) said he had no hope of a comprehensive dealing with this large question. Why was there no hope? Simply because the hon. Member and his friends, instead of allying himself with them to bring about a settlement which would affect them all, took up a position which necessitated antagonism. So far as he (Sir R. Paget) was concerned, he desired to take up a position of offering the hand of friendship to the promoters of the Bill, and of saying to them, "We think you have a grievance; we admit that the arbitrary interpretation of the law is not to be entirely defended, but our grievance is ten times as great as yours. Instead of travelling along different roads, we ought to travel along the same roads; we ought not to adopt

the 'wolf-cum-lamb' policy, but work unitedly in a cause which is of importance to both of us." The hon. Member who had moved the Second Reading had spoken about the deputation which had waited the other day on the President of the Local Government Board. He (Sir R. Paget) did not wish to set up the value of one deputation against another; but the deputation, of which he (Sir R. Paget) was one, was of a very representative character, and included members of the Central Chamber of Agriculture, who again and again, after careful debate, had come to the conclusion that this Bill was opposed to their interests, and therefore ought to be opposed on Second Reading. There was one remark which had fallen from the Mover of the Second Reading which pointed to the need of further inquiry on his part into that which was really a matter of history. The hon. Member had suggested that from time immemorial it had been the custom to rate realty and not personalty. But that statement was not founded on history. The law of rating dated from the Act of Queen Elizabeth, and under that Act every inhabitant of the land had to pay according to his ability, no matter whence that ability was derived; though no doubt as time had gone on personalty had managed to wriggle out of its liability. The hon. Member had argued that local rates were to be considered as something very different from Imperial taxes. Said the hon. Member, "Local rates in one district do not affect local rates in another district, and, therefore, no redistribution of rates could be complained of." But it appeared to him (Sir R. Paget) that there was a great fallacy underlying that argument. If within a given area the rates were levied in a certain way, and the Bill introduced a new method of rating, the effect of which was to shift a burden from the shoulders of one class to the shoulders of another, surely the class who had to bear the increased expense had as much right to complain as a taxpayer would have if his burdens were increased in order to give relief to someone else. Every time this measure was introduced the same arguments were always used, and the same lugubrious tones were made use of to give effect to the propositions advanced; but not a single illustration had been given to support

*Sir Richard H. Paget*

the Bill. As the matter stood there was a world of apprehension and a mere fragment of fact. The proposal put forward by this Bill was to remove the rates that fell upon some people and increase the rates which fell upon others. It was said that this shifting of the burden would be infinitesimal; but he contended that it was perfectly impossible to get away from the fact that if the Bill were passed they would relieve one class and place an additional burden upon another class. The measure was one of a constantly-recurring crop of hardy annuals which came upon Wednesday afternoons; but all he would say about it was this: granted that on more than one occasion Bills somewhat of this nature had been read a second time, that imposed no obligation on the House. This was a new House of Commons, and to them this was a new subject. They had to decide the question upon its merits, and he hoped that on its merits, and its merits alone, the House would refuse to give a Second Reading to the Bill. As to some of the arguments that had been used in favour of the measure, he contended that it had not been proved—and it was incapable of proof—that the present law was uncertain in its operation. It was said that the law must be amended, or all sorts of unhappy things would follow. It was said that the rating law was Judge-made law, and as such it was spoken of disrespectfully. But Judge-made law was the law of the land. Parliament was apt to turn out its work from time to time in a more or less slovenly fashion, and it required the wisdom of a Bench of Judges to determine what it was Parliament really meant; but nobody could fairly contend that because the law had to be interpreted from time to time by the Judges, therefore it should be held to be uncertain and should be declared. He ventured to say that that was a statement which would not be endorsed by any lawyer in the House. As a matter of fact, the rating law was well-known, the decisions of the Judges having all been based upon the same principle. There was no difference between the conclusions arrived at by the Lord Chief Justice and the Master of the Rolls. The Lord Chief Justice said that—

"Things that are capable of being removed, and yet are so far attached to the premises that it is intended they should remain permanently

with the undertaking as permanent appendages essential for the working of the undertaking."

The Master of the Rolls said—

"Things on the premises for the purpose of making, and which do make, them fit for the particular purpose for which they are used."

There was no distinction to be drawn between the two Judgments; they both closely followed the same lines. It, therefore, was not only not proved, but it was incapable of proof that the law was uncertain. It was said that unless the law were amended the land would become desolate, that the walls of the mills would crumble into decay, that the factories would become destitute of machinery. No one would regret more than he such a state of things, but really there was no foundation for the statement, and he did not think the House would be much disturbed by it. It was one thing to amend the law and another thing to declare it. If they declared the law, they did not amend it; if they amended it, they did not declare it. The proposal was to alter the law so that some people would be relieved, whilst others were burdened. Amongst others who would have fresh burdens cast on them would be the agricultural part of the community, who at the present moment were not in a condition to bear any increase of burden, however slight and infinitesimal it might be. Amongst the arguments in favour of the Bill was one he remembered being used two years ago by the hon. Member for Nottingham, whom he did not now see in his place. The hon. Member had told them that the Bill was for the protection of industry. Now the statement was, that it was only for the protection of one limited class of industry. If it had added "and for the aggravation of all others," it would have been more accurate. Now, he objected to a measure that was for the protection of only one industry. If the scheme were one which would effect a complete alteration of a great system of rating, and if it could be said to be one for the protection of all industries so that all might be equally subject to the law, the matter would be different. But the Bill was very limited in its application. There were a vast number of industries of which it took no account whatever. It was said that the law operated unequally, that there was a want of uniformity, that it was in operation here and not in

operation there, and that, therefore, it gave rise to inequalities which were undesirable. He was not going to contest this point; but he would say that if the hon. Member who brought in the Bill, and those who were its promoters, aimed at uniformity in the matter of rates, they must apply themselves to a measure of a much larger character. All who were familiar with the system of rating knew that the whole essence of rating was to arrive at a rateable value which should be fair and just to all persons concerned. It was well-known that there were no two Unions in the country which were agreed. It was one of the scandals of the day that there were at this moment three methods of assessment: one for Imperial taxation, one for the imposition of the county rate, and one for the Union rate. Different scales of deductions, from gross to rateable value, might be enforced in the case of each one of these rates, leading to an entire absence of anything like uniformity. There was no law on the Statute Book which was so full of inequalities as the law of rating. This, unfortunately, was not a Party question. If it were, and Members could infuse all the animus of Party spirit into it, one Government or another would be forced to take it up and settle it, but it only affected every ratepayer in every parish throughout the Kingdom, and, therefore, it was passed by. He hoped the time would come when there would be a Government which would be able to deal effectively with some of the domestic questions which for years had been crying aloud for settlement. A Society calling themselves the National Society for the Exemption of Machinery from Rating had been good enough to send him a pamphlet, in which he found the following statement:—

"It is hoped that careful perusal of both the correspondence and the Bill will show that the only effect of the latter can be to clear up the existing uncertainty of the law, and to provide that factories shall be rated on exactly the same principle as all other rateable property."

He would like to examine this proposition. Take the case of a farm. A farm consisted of land, house, and other buildings, and was rated on what was known as the principle of the hypothetical tenant. A factory was ostensibly rated on precisely the same principle. In the case of a farm, however, the occupier

was rated not only on his ability to pay, but on twice the sum of his assumed property. A factory, on the other hand, was rated on the mere shell—the buildings and floors—*plus* a certain portion of the machinery, irrespective of any profits made. The farmer was rated upon the whole of his profits, and, more than that, upon double his profits. The manufacturer was not rated on his profits at all or his ability to pay. He always looked upon the manufacturer as a man rolling in molten gold. Who would deny that the profits of the country had been made out of the profits of manufacture? Where were the profits of agriculture? “Going—going—gone!” He asked the House whether there could be any sort of similarity between principles of rating which affected two industries in the manner he had described? If hon. Members who were interested in factories thought they had a grievance—and he was not going to contend that there was not something to be said on their side—how much greater was the grievance which beset the farmer and those who were concerned in the land industry, inasmuch as the rating fell upon the one to the fullest extent, and did not touch the fringe of the other's profits. He wished now to examine the Bill itself. To prevent mistakes, he stated generally that in using the terms “rateable machinery” or “machinery unrateable,” he fully accepted the recognised doctrine that machinery was not rateable *per se*. Machinery could only be held to be rateable indirectly, as being attached in some way and enhancing the value of the factory in which the manufacture was carried on. The Bill proposed that unfixed machinery, with some exceptions, should be exempted from rating, and that machinery should also be exempted if it were partially fixed—that was to say, if it could be removed without the removal of any part of the hereditament. All other unspecified machinery would still be subject to rating. But there was a proviso which said—

“Provided also that the terms machines, tools, and appliances, for the purposes of this Act, shall not apply to any machinery, machine, or plant used in or on the hereditament for producing or transmitting first motive power, or for heating or lighting the said hereditament.”

He took it that if a gas-engine were applied in producing first motive power,

whether it were fixed or unfixed, it would have to be rated. If the electric light were introduced, a dynamo, which could be shifted about at will, would be rateable, and a gas stove and all gas or water-pipes for heating and lighting would be rateable. All he could say was, that if these complicated and intricate provisions were to be read into the general law of the country, there was a rare harvest in store for the lawyers. The Bill, instead of settling, would unsettle the law, and it would be necessary to have a series of Judge-made decisions before there could be any certainty as to what was to be regarded as rateable and what as unrateable. The principles on which the Bill was grounded might be said to be entirely inapplicable to it. The measure would afford no relief whatever to the owners or lessees of coal mines, the whole of the machinery used in connection with which would still remain rateable. Its operation seemed to be chiefly, if not entirely, limited to textile factories. He might be asked whether he wanted to leave the law alone. He did not. He thought it was full of defects both in principle and practice, and he fully and entirely admitted that in the matter of machinery a line was drawn, or was attempted to be drawn, of an arbitrary character, for which there was a little to be said. He should like to see the subject dealt with in a different manner. He should like to get rid of the present difficulties, subtleties, and intricacies, to sweep away all the legal cobwebs which had obscured the question, and to settle it in a simple and broad way that all mankind could understand. One defect of the Bill was that, whilst all the tendency of modern alteration of rating law had been to widen its area, the measure proposed to limit the area of rating. He did not know whether it was necessary for him openly to disclaim any hostility to the manufacturers. He had not the slightest hostility towards them. The manufacturers asked the House for relief because the law pressed with some severity on their undertakings. The case of the agriculturists was stronger than that of the manufacturers. The two classes, however, ought not to be opponents, but allies, in this matter. If they could but form an alliance and bring the whole of their united forces to bear upon a

Government, the time would not be far distant when the question would be dealt with in a comprehensive manner by a responsible Ministry. Did anybody believe that even if the Bill were read a second time it would be carried one step further? What would happen would be that the measure, as in previous years, would be added to the number of those infants which were slaughtered at the end of the Session. They could not hope to pass this Bill unless the Government took it up; and, in his opinion, it was not a Bill that deserved to be taken up by them. He would to say to the promoters that they should withdraw the Bill, as it was too limited in application and ought not to pass. Let them join together and ask the Government to give them a satisfactory Bill. If he might say so, without being offensive to the hon. Gentleman who had brought it forward, the Bill seemed to have something of personal interest in it—that seemed to be on the face of it. It was a Bill that ought not to be recommended to the House, because it was a Bill that proposed additional burdens for the struggling industry of agriculture, which was barely able to support itself in the trying circumstances of the day. He ventured to move, “That the Bill be read a second time upon this day six months.”

\***MR. J. POWELL WILLIAMS** (Birmingham, S.) said, he begged leave to second the Amendment, and in doing so he wished to occupy a slightly different position from that taken up by the Mover. In the course of his argument the hon. Baronet informed the House that the manufacturers of England were rolling in gold. He could not quite follow him in that statement. The hon. Baronet asked them to look at the question from the point of view of his constituents, but this was not the point of view from which he (Mr. Williams) wished to regard it. He had listened with great attention to the statement of the Member for Central Leeds (Mr. G. W. Balfour). In the course of his argument that hon. Gentleman laid great stress on the fact that rating authorities throughout the country were in favour of this Bill. He seemed to think that that was a sufficient argument in favour of the Bill. If that were so, he rather disposed of it as he

went on, for he declared with perfect accuracy and truth that at the present time there was great uncertainty in the law, and the persons who of all others who were entitled to seek a change were the rating authorities who were interested in the matter. The rating authorities had supported the Bill, because they were aware that if it passed it would render their task simpler and easier than it was at the present moment. The rating authorities had had to assert the Chard decision, and they supported the Bill simply because it would give them lighter duties, and not because of any merits it possessed. That accounted for the fact which the hon. Member for Central Leeds pointed out; and if they passed the Bill, the rating authorities would be called upon to depart from a system that had prevailed for years. In moving the Second Reading the Member for North Salford (Mr. Holland) gave them a description of what might happen if the Bill were not passed into law; but he also answered himself as he went along, for he quoted statistics to show that there was a vast number of cases throughout the country in which the Chard case had made no change in the general system pursued. He did not think the forebodings of the hon. Gentleman were likely to be realised if the Bill were rejected. The argument of the Member for Central Leeds was that, had it not been for the decision in the Chard case, and in the Tyne boiler case, they would never have heard of this Bill. There had been a system in operation for a long series of years, and the decision in the Chard case came like a bolt from the blue. It was in opposition to that system—and his hon. Friend the Member for Central Leeds told them—and he accepted his statement—that the Bill was intended to make no change in matters as they stood, but to avert a change. He would like to look at the Bill, in the light of that statement, to see how it would affect the great town a portion of which he represented. But the hon. Gentleman did not apply himself to that point. He (Mr. Williams) might say, for his own part, that he did not for a moment contend that the decision of the Court in the Chard case was a decision that it was desirable to apply to the manufacturers of the country. He said that for the reason that it involved the rating of personalty.

The promoters of the Bill said that they wanted simply to get back to the *status quo ante* of the Chard case—

MR. G. W. BALFOUR: And the Tyne boiler case.

MR. POWELL WILLIAMS: Quite so. If the Bill took them back to that, and no further, he was in favour of it; but it did go back further than that. The hon. Member who moved the Second Reading said, "This Bill does not exempt any machinery from rating." But in Birmingham it would exempt it from rating, and they would have there a condition of things that did not exist prior to the Tyne boiler case and the Chard case. It was said that Birmingham alone would be affected; but the system that prevailed in Birmingham prevailed also in the immediate neighbourhood. This was what he complained of in regard to the Bill—that it would exempt from rating a subject of assessment which amounted to £20,000 per annum. That was to say, that the rating authority of Birmingham would be stopped by the Bill of their powers of taxing property of the annual value of over £20,000 a year.

MR. BARRAN (York, W.R., Otley): Will the hon. Gentleman explain how he arrives at that conclusion?

MR. POWELL WILLIAMS said that there was included in the assessment in Birmingham machinery which was not only motive power, not only shafting, but machinery attached to the freehold, and in some cases not attached, and which, if the Bill passed, would be exempt from rating to the value of £20,000 a year. Of course, the promoters of the Bill denied that state of affairs. But he did not give it on his own *ipse dixit*—his authority was the rating powers of Birmingham—namely, the overseers; and what they said was that if the Bill passed, they would be excluded from rating the motive power of manufactories on the gross at 50s. the nominal horse-power, which they were accustomed to do now. That taxation amounted to £6,000 a year; and if it were removed, it meant an additional 1d. in the £1 on the improvement rate of Birmingham. He put it to the promoters of the Bill, if that 1d. rate was not paid by the manufacturer, who was going to pay it? It must be paid by the householders.

Mr. J. Powell Williams

MR. G. W. BALFOUR: By the landlords.

MR. POWELL WILLIAMS said, it would not be paid by the landlords for this reason: that by whatever amount they increased the rate the landlords had to pay they increased by so much what the tenants had to pay. The hon. Member shook his head; but there had been cases in Birmingham which absolutely proved his contention. In these cases the landlords of houses in the Compound of Birmingham had claimed more rent, on the representation—absolutely inaccurate and without foundation—that the Free Education Act of the late Government had increased the School Board rate. He had been credibly informed that there were cases in which landlords had on these statements been able to get 3d. a week more from their tenants in rent.

MR. G. W. BALFOUR: Will the hon. Gentleman permit me to say that surely in that case the landlord could have raised the rent without any such statement, whether false or true?

MR. POWELL WILLIAMS said, the landlord could not raise the rent arbitrarily in that way without some plausible excuse. At any rate, he contended that if the manufacturers did not pay this 1d. rate, it would have to be paid by somebody else, who would undoubtedly be the householders. He believed that at least £3,000 paid in Birmingham by the manufacturers as rates on machinery would, if the Bill were passed, have to be paid by the artisans. It was said by its promoters that this Bill was merely intended to assert the *status quo ante* the Tyne boiler decision; but so far as Birmingham at least was concerned, the Bill would place the manufacturers in a much better position than they had been before that decision had been given, at the expense of the artisans. It had been said that it was bad policy to tax what were known as the sources of industry. That seemed a very good argument at first sight, but he wanted to know from those who used it where were they going to draw the line? He supposed that the building in which a manufacture was carried on was quite as much a source of industry as machinery. At any rate, it was a source of industry. Did the promoters of the Bill say that the building should not be

taxed? Capital was also in the same sense a source of industry, but were the promoters of the Bill ready to propose that the capital invested in machinery and in industries was not to be taxed? The argument against taxing "powers of industry" did not prevail in America, for in that country not only were hereditaments taxed and rated, but all kinds of machinery and all kinds of personal property were also taxed and rated; and, in his belief, if the taxation of the sources of industry had been a bad thing for industry, their American friends would have found it out long before this. He met with, a short time since, a very interesting speech on this question which had been delivered by the present hon. Member for Middlesbrough (Mr. Havlock Wilson), at a town's meeting held in Sunderland in 1890. The hon. Member said in that speech—

"Why should they take the rates off machinery and put it upon the shopkeepers, to the disadvantage of working men?"

That was a principle which had been enunciated by the late Professor Thorold Rogers, who had said that the rating of shopkeepers was a tax on commodities, or, in other words, the more rating that was placed on the shopkeepers the more purchasers had to pay for the necessities of life. The hon. Member for Middlesbrough also said—

"I wonder how it is made out that machinery increases labour. The improvement in machinery has unquestionably thrown labour out of employment, and, under the circumstances, I declare that it is altogether unfair and unjust to relieve machinery, at any rate at the expense of labour."

The hon. Member also said in his speech that he could understand employers of labour supporting the Bill. So could he; for there was no question that the employers would benefit, but nobody else would benefit if the Bill were passed. He was very much struck by the fact that the Railway Companies, who were always so much alert in connection with any Bill, which they thought would affect their interests adversely, were altogether silent about this Bill. It was an ominous silence; and some hon. Members, who were promoting the Bill, were Directors of Railway Companies. He had heard on an authority, which at any rate was good enough for him to use in the House, that if the Bill became

law in its present shape, the works of the London and North Western Railway Company would be relieved of rating to the extent of £6,000 a year. The works of that company were mainly situated at Wolverton and Crewe, where there was a population almost entirely artisan. Who was to pay this £6,000 a year if the Railway Company did not pay it? Why, of course, the *employés* of the Railway Company. It would be the same in Birmingham.

MR. BARRAN: Will the hon. Gentleman tell us what is the rateable value of Birmingham?

MR. POWELL WILLIAMS said that the rateable value of houses in the Compound of Birmingham—

MR. BARRAN: I mean the borough.

MR. POWELL WILLIAMS said that there was no borough—Birmingham was a city. The rateable value of the houses in the Compound of Birmingham amounted to nearly £300,000, and it was on these houses that the additional 1d. rate must fall.

MR. BARRAN said that the reason he asked for the figures was that if the House were in possession of the information he could form a conclusion as to the accuracy of the hon. Member's statement which he did not admit.

\*MR. SPEAKER: The interruption is not in Order. The substance of it may be made in a subsequent speech.

MR. POWELL WILLIAMS said his hon. Friend should have given him notice of this question. Since his time as a member of the Corporation, the boundaries of the city had been greatly increased, and he did not pledge himself to the accuracy of the figures. With regard to his statement that the rates of Birmingham would be increased by 1d. in the £1 if the Bill passed, his authority was the rating authority of Birmingham. The promoters of the Bill stated that it was merely intended to put the manufacturers of England back again into the position which they occupied before the recent legal decisions. He would ask the promoters a question and would test their sincerity on that point—if they would pardon him the expression—by the answer they gave to the question. Would they agree to insert in the Bill in Committee a clause directing the rating authorities to rate motive power at not less than 50s. a nominal horse



gross—to use a technical phrase—unless in any particular case a sufficient reason was advanced to justify them in making a more lenient assessment. If they accepted that proposal, it would leave Birmingham precisely where it was now, and it left the manufacturers of the North of England precisely where they were now. If the promoters of the Bill did not accept that proposal, it became the more manifest that their intention was not to put the manufacturers back in the position they occupied before the legal decisions, but to confer on them additional advantages.

Amendment proposed, to leave out the word “now,” and at the end of the Question to add the words “upon this day six months.”—(*Sir Richard Paget.*)

Question proposed, “That the word ‘now’ stand part of the Question.”

SIR WILLIAM HOULDSWORTH (Manchester, N.W.) said, the objection which had been taken to the Bill by the hon. Member who had last spoken simply resolved itself into this: that a system prevailed in Birmingham—he was not concerned to say whether it was good or bad—by which they assessed the value of the property on which rates were levied by so much per horse-power. He did not think that if the Bill passed there would be any objection whatever to any locality taking any mode it pleased by which to arrive at the rateable value. Birmingham was not the only place where what he might call the rough-and-ready way of ascertaining the value of the property in industrial hereditaments was adopted. In Lancashire there was more than one system in operation. It appeared to him that if they settled the principle by the Bill, the exact mode in which the valuation of a particular property is taken might well be left to the locality. A year or two ago he calculated very carefully the mode in which assessment was taken in Birmingham, and he came decidedly to the conclusion that the 50s. per nominal horse-power would work out very much the same result as if they took the hereditament itself and included in it the motive power and other things which the Bill allowed to be assessed. He doubted whether the 50s. per nominal horse-power would give a larger result than

would be found under the Bill. He would like to point out to the hon. Member that Birmingham was not in the same position as other parts of the country, because he found that the borough surveyor of Birmingham in his evidence before the Committee was asked—

“If you were to value the properties in Birmingham on Mr. Headley’s principle would it not very much increase the value?” and he replied, “No doubt it would increase the value.”

Therefore, he thought the hon. Member for South Birmingham (Mr. J. Powell Williams) would be well advised in joining in the promotion of the Bill, because if an assessment were made of the industrial buildings of Birmingham according to Mr. Headley’s principle, the assessment would be very much higher than it was under the existing system. The arguments which the House had heard on behalf of the agricultural interest from the hon. Member for Somersetshire were very old, and seemed to be based on a misapprehension. It seemed to the hon. Member that, if the Bill were carried, the machinery in industrial hereditaments in agricultural districts would cease to be rateable, and therefore a heavier burden would fall on the agriculturists. As a matter of fact, in 435 of the 652 unions of the country no alteration whatever had been made in accordance with the new principle deemed to be set up, and therefore in these unions no change would be made in the present practice of rating hereditaments and the machinery. In only 26 unions had a change been made, and in only 11 of these had any material difficulty arisen. The novel principle that had been introduced into the law had become more and more exacting every day. The hon. Member had not noticed that the promoters of the Bill had taken care that every justice should be done the ratepayers, because they had gone further than proposing to merely assess the shell of the factory, for they had included the steam-engines, boilers, and lighting apparatus. They had felt it was possible that the valuers, in the words of the original Bill, might possibly only value the shell of the building without the engines or boilers. They had expressed in the Proviso that it was not the mere shell that was to be

valued, but the building itself was to be assessed upon the principle of the amount it might reasonably be expected to let at to a tenant under certain circumstances. It appeared to him that would be as far as justice would allow them to go, because the moment they departed from what really belonged to the hereditaments—treating the hereditaments not merely as an empty building or warehouse, but treating them as for manufacturing purposes—if they went beyond that they immediately introduced the question of personalty, and if that was to be introduced into industries it must be extended very much further to show how the law acted, and he was disposed to say absurdly acted, if the recent decisions were to be maintained. He would give an instance to show what he meant. In reference to a flour mill the proprietor said—

“The mill was originally assessed at £24. I have now changed my machinery from the old stones to the new system, and the Assessment Committee has put it down at the modest sum of £165 gross, £118 rating. I have not increased the size of my building one inch.”

That seemed to him not only to be a very great injustice to industries, but it was absolutely a penalty that seemed to be enforced against improvements in industries, and in the adoption of new and, if new, more economical methods of producing the products of our great industries. He had very great sympathy with the argument of the hon. Gentleman when he said he thought a general Bill was very desirable, dealing with the whole question of rating. He did not think that any supporter of the Bill had ever had any other opinion than that. The Select Committee that sat upon this question thought it was most desirable that the whole valuation system should be examined, and that a general Bill should be brought in to improve the present most anomalous system. The Committee said they desired that such a Bill should be introduced, but it must be remembered that, at the same time, this Select Committee reported in favour of this Bill. They did not profess this was a general Bill, but it was a Bill that would not only affect cotton factories in the North of England, but an immense number of industries throughout the whole country of different kinds. He thought that, having waited for 10 years

since this Select Committee reported, the time had arrived when they should prevent this insidious system being carried further into new districts; and though they would cordially join in a general measure if the Government of the day would bring in a Bill for the purpose, they must, he thought, still support this Bill, which prevented a great injustice and evil being done to their industries. He should be glad to join their agricultural friends in any measure that would deal justly with them as well as any other industry.

\*MR. DODD (Essex, Maldon) said, he must first apologise to the House that he had the misfortune not to come from Birmingham, but from the inferior portion of Her Majesty's dominions that lay outside the municipal boundary of that ancient city, and therefore he should be unable to follow the hon. Member for South Birmingham (Mr. Powell-Williams) as to the special law or practice in regard to rating adopted in Birmingham, and compelled to confine his remarks to the general law. Most hon. Members would agree with him that the law of rating did not stand on a satisfactory footing, and he was not surprised that hon. Members representing agricultural districts appeared here to oppose the Bill in the interests of those districts. But for all that he was going to speak in support of the Bill. The agriculturalists had, it appeared to him, a grievance, that they, as ratepayers, were taxed on that which was their stock-in-trade. There was no doubt that all taxes which tended to hinder the production of food were a great evil, and, therefore, he did not wonder that they, whilst such taxes remained, opposed a Bill that proposed to relieve a different class. At the same time, he should himself decline to adopt that course. He should be glad to see the whole matter dealt with comprehensively, so that the agriculturalist should be as lightly taxed as possible, as lightly as those who supported the Bill said the manufacturers should be to-day. A challenge was thrown down by one hon. Member with regard to the law. He said that no hon. Member who was a lawyer would venture to say there was any difficulty about the law. Well, he (Mr. Dodd) had the misfortune to be a lawyer, and yet he did venture to say that the law was in a very

confused, intricate, and difficult condition, and he did not say so merely of his own motion, because he found two text-books that dealt with it, one by Mr. Boyle and the other by Mr. Castle, expressing that opinion. Mr. Boyle said, "The law is obscure and ill-defined," and Mr. Castle said, "The law is to be found in a series of cases which it is impossible to reconcile." He ventured to regard this Bill as making the law definite on one special point, and as the commencement of something in the shape of relief for the productive industries. At present the whole law of rating was in an unsatisfactory state, the rates came on the letting value, and the letting value, it appeared to him, was not the true test of value. Let him take an example. If a man built a very expensive house, but an ugly house, and in an impossible situation, he would be rated upon what someone else would be likely to pay per annum in the shape of rent, instead of being rated upon the money he had thrown away. In a similar way, when a man had laid out his money well, so that his house would let easily, the rent was likely to be high, and consequently the rate was high. The present system tended rather to put the weight of the rate upon the wrong shoulders. This was done in the case of the farmer, who was heavily rated upon that land which he used for the production of food. He desired, as far as possible, to relieve all productive industries from taxation, and it was on this ground he ventured to say the Bill should be supported, to relieve the manufacturer. For himself, he represented what the hon. Member for Central Leeds (Mr. Gerald Balfour) called a mixed district; that was, where there were large tracts of agricultural land, and also small towns in which there were manufacturing industries. With regard to the manufacturing industries, they were by no means flourishing; the difficulties of transport, and the other difficulties they had to contend with, made their existence a continual struggle. It was of enormous interest to the whole population that these manufactories should be allowed to continue. It was of interest to the agriculturalists almost as much as to those employed in manufacture, and he ventured to support the present Bill, believing that upon the whole it was for

*Mr. Dodd*

the benefit of the agriculturalist that the Bill should be supported. He further thought they must all be inclined to regard it as an evil that the principle on which rating was imposed at present varied so considerably. Some seemed to have that special and peculiar law of Birmingham, which he could not understand, and others that of Sunderland, which appeared to be the law of England. It was hard upon the manufacturers that in some cases they should be dealt with in one way, and in other similar cases their competitors in another way, and therefore it would be far better to have a definite rule laid down. The present Bill appeared to have had the assent of this House on many previous occasions, so much so that the hon. Member for Central Leeds (Mr. Gerald Balfour), in his admirable speech on a former occasion, described it as "the hardy annual." He (Mr. Dodd) hoped on this occasion it would be sufficiently hardy to get into Committee, and emerge in the shape of an Act of Parliament, for it was of the utmost importance that the law should be made clear and intelligible, and the law, as proposed in this Bill, was both clear and intelligible. It was in substance the same law as that which was in existence in Ireland. At the present day in Ireland the law was, in substance, that the motive power should be valued, but that the value of the machinery, other than the motive power, should not be taken into account in assessing the valuation. The House would be aware this matter was dealt with on a previous occasion, in 1887, by the Committee mentioned by hon. Members who had preceded him, and that there was a Special Report made which bore out that which he was saying with regard to the difference of system adopted in different parts of the country. The Special Report of that Committee said—

"It is clear from the evidence that the system acted upon by valuers in different parts of the country has varied considerably, and the practice, in the absence of legislation, will be materially affected in the future. They consider it most important there should be uniformity, and think the whole subject of rating should be dealt with comprehensively by the Government with the least delay."

They then continued—

"The Bill referred to them will, as amended, meet the case of industries, and they, therefore, agree to report the Bill, as amended, to the House."

In conclusion, while agreeing most thoroughly in the conclusion arrived at by the Committee, that it was expedient the Government should take the whole subject in hand and deal with it in a comprehensive spirit, he confessed that, when he remembered the number of subjects which Her Majesty's Government had in hand, and which they had to deal with in a comprehensive spirit, and remembering the great assistance they received from gentlemen on the other side in dealing with these matters in a comprehensive manner, he doubted whether the Government would be able to take this in hand, and for that reason, therefore, he ventured to recommend the present Bill to the House.

\*MR. OLDROYD (Dewsbury) said the hon. Member for South Birmingham (Mr. Powell Williams), so far as this Bill was concerned, had made a great many admissions. The hon. Member informed them that, if the principle laid down were to be universally adopted, personalty would in a large measure be subject to rateable value, and in a much larger measure than had been the case in past years; and, further, the hon. Member seemed very anxious that what he called the *status quo ante* should be adopted as the law of the land, and that the present practice should be continued by the assessment committees. The hon. Member told them, moreover, that in Birmingham, which was again held up to them as a pattern which everyone possessing ordinary common-sense would follow, the assessment authorities did have regard to machinery, and that having regard to machinery they came to the conclusion that an assessment at the rate of 50s. per nominal horse-power covered the whole ground, not only as rating the shell, and the boilers, and engines and motive power, but everything else.

MR. J. POWELL WILLIAMS was sure his hon. Friend did not wish to misrepresent him; he did not wish to convey that the rating authorities failed to include all the machinery, and only rated a portion of it.

MR. OLDROYD said it was very difficult to ascertain what the position of the hon. Member was. The hon. Member suggested, and proposed in fact, that it should be adopted in Committee on

this Bill that, as a general rule, 50s. per nominal horse-power should cover not only the shell, but also the boilers, shafting, and other machinery—that was the position he took up and the suggestion he made—and that that should be taken as a sort of standard. The fact was, that this nominal horse-power was largely adopted in a large proportion of the districts of the rating authorities, not only in the West Riding of Yorkshire, but in the County of Lancaster. The hon. Member for South Birmingham now said not all the machinery, but certain proportions, were assessed by the assessors on the computation that came to an estimate of 50s. for nominal horse-power. The assessment authorities in Yorkshire and Lancashire did not profess to assess in that way, but they came to the same conclusion as to the value of these assessments, estimating them by nominal horse-power. He should have no personal objection to the introduction of such a clause as the hon. Member recommended if it met with the views of Members who represented other portions of the industrial parts of the country; but, at the same time, it must be clearly laid down that they did not admit that machinery in Birmingham was rated, that was to say, comprehensively rated; it was only rated in the same proportion as it was rated in other parts of the country, where they came to the conclusion that 50s. per nominal horse-power represented a fair estimate of the rateabilities of the hereditaments. The hon. Member went on further to suggest that they ought to hesitate very much before they put any embargo on the sources of industry, and then proceeded to say that in rating any sort of property connected with our industries they were more or less putting taxes on that industry; and the hon. Member cited the case of the buildings themselves, and the capital employed in carrying them out. But what they wanted to arrive at was a fair and reasonable position with regard to the extent to which the property connected with industrial enterprises should or should not be rated. If the clauses in the Bill on that point were referred to, it would be found they were not proposing by this Bill to limit the area of rateability, so far as it at present practically obtained, but simply seeking to define that area consistent with the practice of

the assessment authorities in the past, but inconsistent with the recent decisions of the Judges. A good deal had been said to-day with regard to the question being undertaken by the Government in a more comprehensive way. He thought every Member was agreed that such a thing was very desirable, but until that time arrived it was highly expedient that something should be done to arrest the present tendency of affairs, and the possibly increased unpleasantness of that position, because, as had been referred to already, a very large majority of the assessment authorities had not complied with the recent decisions of the Judges, and if they were to do so, as the hon. Member had said, a great deal of difficulty would be raised by the extension of the rateable area. Reference was made just now by the hon. Member for South Birmingham to the practice in America, and he said that there they not only rated the hereditament, but also the personal property. He quite agreed that was the case, and he was not here to say that should not be the case in this country; but, seeing that it was not the case generally, they did not think it should be applied merely and solely to the manufacturing industries, which already had a large number of burdens cast upon them. Reference had been made to-day to the fact that the workmen of this country were in sympathy with this Bill. That was an indisputable fact, because a very large number of the trades unions of the country were represented on the deputation that waited upon the right hon. Gentleman the President of the Board of Trade (Mr. Mundella) a few days ago on this question. The trades unions of the country supported this Bill because they believed the spirit of it was consistent with their interests. Not only that, but he believed the operative workers of the country had a further consideration which inclined them to support the Bill, and that was the feeling that every impost put upon our industries, and especially the textile industry as carried on in factories, would tend to diminish the prosperity of that industry, and an attempt would be made by those who were responsible for its conduct to evade these imposts. If the Bill did not pass, there would be a tendency to drive out of the factory a considerable quantity of

light machinery, which would find its way to the houses of the workmen. He was not here to say our factory system was an ideal one, but every hon. Member would agree with him that our factory system was, at all events, a vast improvement upon that form of the sweating system that was developed by the introduction to the homes of the working classes of manual and light machine labour. Therefore, he trusted the House would consider seriously the importance of this question, and the possibility that by this addition to the rateability of the factories they might be driving into the houses of the workpeople, and militating against their domestic comfort, that class of work which was now conducted in the factory, but which would be driven into the homes of the workpeople. The only other point he would raise was that the law as now laid down by the Judges in this country was different from the law as it existed in Ireland, and also as it existed in Scotland. If there was to be one method of assessment in England, and a lighter one in Ireland and Scotland, the difference would very seriously affect the competition between individual firms in England and competing firms in Ireland and Scotland, therefore they could not treat this question lightly. He trusted the House would see the absolute necessity of identity in the law, so far as this question of rateability was concerned, between Ireland, Scotland, and England respectively, and would confirm the decision of previous Parliaments by passing the Second Reading of this Bill by a majority not less, but larger, than on the last occasion.

MR. WHITELEY (Stockport), as a Member who had only been in that House a few days, excused his intervention in the Debate by saying he had throughout his life been connected with the textile and manufacturing industries of Lancashire, and this question was one which created a widespread impression throughout Lancashire. The Bill before the House had been termed a "hardy annual," and the hon. Gentleman who had moved the Second Reading had said that the opponents of the measure frequently asked why it cropped up so frequently. The reason for the continual cropping up of the Bill was because the manufacturers of this country felt they were in some measure

suffering under a grievance, and until that grievance was recognised and dealt with by Parliament they had adequate cause for bringing the measure forward each year. It had been shown that the Unions of this county were practically unanimous in favour of the measure; the House of Commons had on previous occasions voted in favour of it; throughout Lancashire and Yorkshire the Chambers of Commerce, all the trade bodies and communities, were entirely in its favour, and one might well ask why this little Bill, which would remove a disability from the shoulders of the manufacturers of this country, should not be dealt with by the House, when other heroic measures were placed before it to take up its time, none of which so vitally affected the working classes? It had been said that this Bill was very limited and very small. For his part, he was only sorry it was not more far-reaching, because whatever might be the position of the agricultural industry throughout the country—and he admitted it was in a bad state—he could say that these industries in Lancashire were not in a more prosperous condition at the present time. The hon. Gentleman who moved the rejection of the Bill argued that it was not desirable to deal with this question in a fragmentary manner. Undoubtedly, that might be a very good argument, but it seemed to him that, if the Bill passed, no effective bar would be created to dealing with the question in a comprehensive manner at some future time, and, because justice could not be done all round, it was somewhat hard to the manufacturing classes of this country that this small matter, which would remove some injustice from their shoulders, should be further delayed. It was these petty harassings and these disabilities which so seriously interfered with particular trades, and compelled manufacturers to close their establishments or transfer their business to other parts of the world. The hon. Baronet who had moved the rejection of this Bill seemed to believe that manufacturers were a very flourishing class and that they were rolling in molten gold. He was a manufacturer, and he was open to allow that he was not rolling in either molten gold or molten silver. If those hon. Gentlemen who advocated the rejection of this Bill would cast their eyes down the share

lists of the Oldham Mills at the present time they would find that the proprietors were not rolling in gold, but that the various companies had large debit balances on their books, which they would have to wipe out before they were even able to declare a profit. In regard to the spinning industry in the town where he lived he could say it was a diminishing quantity, and at the present time the spindles in and around Blackburn were not one-half as numerous as they were 20 years ago. It was argued that if this burden were removed from the shoulders of the manufacturers it would have to be placed somewhere else. But the question they had to consider was whether the burden was rightly placed where it was. If it was, then let it remain, but if not, and if its effect was to hamper and restrict the industries of this country, then by all means that burden should be removed. Very small matters affected trade, as was shown by the fact that in the cotton industry, which was in such a stagnant condition, a dispute was going on about such a small matter as  $2\frac{1}{2}$  per cent., and if, as had been alleged, this was a small Bill it dealt with a matter which undoubtedly detrimentally affected an important industry and afforded an additional reason for removing the grievance complained of. As one who was connected with one of the largest machinery manufacturing works in the world he could state that two-thirds or three-fourths of the whole of the machinery produced in Lancashire at the present time was going abroad, which showed that this country would have to face increased competition in future. In view of such facts, and in face of the disastrous position of trade generally throughout the country, he considered the House ought to cordially agree to the Second Reading of this Bill, which he hoped would be carried by even a greater majority than on previous occasions.

Mr. JOICEY (Durham, Chester-le-Street) regretted that the hon. Member for Sunderland (Mr. Storey) was not present to take part in this Debate, because he represented a district which was specially interested in this matter; and as he himself represented a portion of the same district, he was glad to have the opportunity of saying a word or two upon the subject they were now discussing.

ing. Various allusions had been made to the number of times that this Bill had passed its Second Reading in Parliament; but he would remind hon. Members that last year this Second Reading was obtained by a *coup* by the promoters of the Bill at an Evening Sitting.

**MR. MOWBRAY** : The hon. Gentleman is under a misapprehension. The Second Reading was passed last year by a majority of more than 100, after Debate in a full House.

**MR. JOICEY** begged pardon. He had made a mistake. It was the year before last that the Bill was suddenly rushed through at an Evening Sitting. On that occasion it was moved without any Speech whatever on the House resuming at 9 o'clock, and hon. Members who came down at five minutes past 9 were astonished to find that the Second Reading had been agreed to. Therefore, so far as that occasion was concerned, at all events, the supporters of the Bill were not entitled to claim credit for the circumstances under which it passed its Second Reading. There were some in that House who thought that Englishmen had an advantage over Irishmen and Scotchmen. He was glad to think there were hon. Members who recognised that, at all events, in regard to the rating of machinery, Scotchmen and Irishmen were on a better footing than Englishmen; but he scarcely thought that the hon. Members for Lancashire and Gloucestershire, and those who were supporting this Bill, should complain of that, because although the law had been distinct and clear for some time—at all events, since the decision in the Chard case—the manufacturers of Lancashire and Gloucestershire who had been promoting this Bill had really been in the same position as Scotchmen and Irishmen upon this question. They had not had an increase of rates put upon them. They had heard lugubrious statements as to what would happen if this Bill did not pass. He thought they in the North of England, in the Counties of Durham and Northumberland, who for many years had rated their machinery practically upon the basis of the Chard decision, had a right to congratulate themselves that they did not seem to have suffered to any extent from this system of rating. He looked upon this Bill as entirely a Bill

for benefitting textile industries. Its object was to relieve certain manufacturers of their fair share of rates at the expense of other ratepayers in the community. They, in their part of the country, had paid their fair share of rates, and whatever hon. Members might say, he maintained that the view the Assessment Committees in Northumberland and Durham took of the law was the right view, and that manufacturers in Lancashire and other districts, and the Assessment Committees in those districts, had not conformed to what really was the law. It was not until a North countryman—**Mr. Hedley**—insisted upon this view of the law being recognised that difficulties arose in Lancashire, and, as a matter of fact, instead of being thankful for the exemption they had had so long, their Lancashire friends came forward and said, "You should make that exemption permanent." He maintained that no real case whatever had been made out for the passing of this Bill. There were large industries, even in Lancashire, which were opposed to the measure. His hon. Friend near him, who spoke a few minutes ago (**Mr. Oldroyd**), stated that the working classes of this country were in favour of this Bill. He maintained that that was not an accurate statement. They had the coal trade of Durham and Northumberland, representing a very large number of workmen, and the whole of those workmen were opposed to this measure, because they believed that if it were to pass it would throw upon the mines in their districts rates which ought to be borne by manufacturers. The members of the United Coal Trade Association of the North of England were also strongly opposed to this measure. They said—

"The object of the measure is to relieve certain classes of machinery from rating, and the effect of it if passed would be to seriously diminish the rateable value of manufacturing districts by the exemption of a very large amount of machinery used in factories and works which has hitherto been liable, and consequently to largely increase the rates in order to make up the deficiency thus caused. Under the Bill no relief would be given to collieries, the machinery used at them not coming within the definition of that which is to be excluded from rating, and colliery owners, in common with other ratepayers, would therefore be saddled with a heavy increase in their rates in order to reduce those paid by the owners of factories and other users of machinery which the Bill proposes to exempt."

MR. TOMLINSON (Preston): What is the hon. Member quoting from?

MR. JOICEY said he was quoting from a circular issued last year by the North of England United Coal Trade Association. He, however, took the precaution to telegraph to the Secretary of the Association, and he assured him that the Association was still opposed to the Bill. There was a large population represented by these industries who were opposed to this Bill, and therefore he took issue with his hon. Friend when he said that the artisans of this country were in favour of it. Allusion had been made to the Borough of Gateshead. Now, Gateshead was a town of some 90,000 inhabitants, and these inhabitants consisted almost exclusively of artisans who worked at the various manufactories. The present rateable value of Gateshead was £272,000. It would be very difficult to estimate what the effect of the exemptions under this Bill would be upon that borough. As he said, the machinery had been rated practically on the terms of the Chard case, so that a much larger proportion of machinery would have to be exempt in that borough than probably in any other part of the Kingdom. Sunderland, Jarrow, South Shields, and all the boroughs in their locality were practically in the same position. It had been estimated by one authority that the rateable value would be reduced something like £42,000; by another that the rateable value would be reduced £20,000. These were the two extremes, but he thought the probability was, that an exemption such as was proposed would reduce the rateable value on the rating of machinery to something between the sums of £20,000 and £40,000. What would be the effect of this upon Gateshead? If the rateable value were reduced by £40,000, that would be nearly one-sixth of the whole rateable value. The borough rates for Gateshead were at present 4s. 9d. in the £1, and if they were to reduce the rateable value by £40,000 they would increase the borough rate to be levied upon the other ratepayers to 5s. 8d., an increase of no less than 11d. in the £1. Supposing they took it at just half that—£20,000—it would increase the rate to the extent of 5½d. or 6d., so that if they took the lowest sum estimated, the increase on the rates would amount to 6d. in the £1,

leviable upon the ordinary ratepayer in the Borough of Gateshead. Well, Gateshead had borrowed under the Public Loans Act and otherwise to the extent of £200,000. What was the security for this? The security was the rates, and this Bill proposed, so far as Gateshead was concerned, to injure the security upon which this money was borrowed. He said that Parliament should consider well before it attempted to alter the law by a side-wind, as it were, and to interfere with important financial arrangements of this character. He considered that it would be most unfair to those who had lent their money to Gateshead—the creditors of the town—to tamper with their security in this way. Besides this, the Free Libraries Act was in operation at Gateshead. At the present time they levied the full amount allowed under that Act, 1d. in the £1. They spent one-third of the amount they received on repaying capital, they spent one-third on salaries, and one-third on literature; and if the rateable value were to be reduced by £40,000, their available income for the purposes of the Free Library would be curtailed to the extent of 17 per cent. That 17 per cent. could not be taken from the third that was spent on repaying capital, it could not be taken very well from the salaries of those who had the management of the Library, and, therefore, it would have to be taken from the amount spent in literature every year, which would be a very great disadvantage to the borough. And who were the men who were benefitted by this expenditure? They were the very artisans, the very *employés* of these gentlemen who at present contributed their fair share to the rate. He thought it was a monstrous thing to attempt to relieve these gentlemen when their own *employés* were the very people who got the benefit from the rates that they paid. The population of Gateshead was entirely composed of the artisan class. The House would at once realise that, when he stated that out of the entire rateable value no less than £77,000 represented tenemented property. What, then, would be the effect in Gateshead if this Bill should pass? The effect would be this: that the amount which was at the present time paid by the employers, whether it were 6d. or 1s. in the £1, would in future



be paid by their workmen. In other words, they would have to pay a large proportion of the rates, so that their employers might escape from them. And what was the effect of that practically? The practical effect was nothing more nor less than a reduction of their wages. He could understand the action of the textile industries in trying to get rid of this charge upon their manufactures, but he did protest against manufacturers being exempt from these charges when they had to be borne by other people. Before they attempted to deal with this question they should have more information and more satisfactory evidence, so that all the different interests might be fully considered by a Committee or by the Government. He could well understand many people holding the view that personal property should be rated, but he could not understand why machinery, because it happened to be of a heavy description, should be rated, and machinery which happened to be of a light description should be exempted from rating. Every manufacturer who introduced machinery into his works did so for his own benefit, and he could not think that any question of rating would prevent a manufacturer from having in his works the best machinery he could get. He maintained that the textile industries have been very fortunate in the position they have occupied for many years, and that they have no right to the exemption they got. It was not according to law, because if it was then in their part of the country they had been robbed in excess of what the law allowed. According to the decision in the Chard case they were shown to have been acting in strict conformity with the law, while the Assessment Committees outside their district had not been acting according to law. Lord Salisbury, speaking some 12 or 15 months ago, stated that it was possible the time might come when personal property would have to contribute to the rates. He quite agreed with Lord Salisbury that it was possible the time might come when this would be necessary; but why should they now, even looking at the question from the point of view of personal property, take this retrograde step? It was a fair question for consideration by a Committee or by the Government whether we

should tax personal property generally. He must say he agreed with the hon. Baronet who moved the rejection of the Bill that this was a matter which should be done by the Government. He did not believe in tampering with an important financial question of this kind without grave consideration. They had had a speech from his hon. Friend the Member for South Birmingham (Mr. Powell Williams) which he did not thank him for, because he was under the impression that he was in thorough opposition to this Bill; but in this case, as in others, they now found that Birmingham was only looking after its own interest. So long as the promoters of this Bill were prepared to give his hon. Friend his own little advantage he was quite prepared to throw overboard Members like the hon. Baronet (Sir R. Paget) and himself, who were speaking on behalf of those who have large interests at stake.

MR. POWELL WILLIAMS: No, no.

MR. JOICEY: I beg my hon. Friend's pardon. I understood him to say, and I think the House understood him to say, that if the promoters would undertake to limit the action of this Bill in Birmingham to a charge of 50s. per horse-power he would be prepared to withdraw his opposition.

MR. POWELL WILLIAMS: I did not limit my suggestion to Birmingham, but am prepared to see it made applicable to the whole Kingdom.

MR. JOICEY said, he was not prepared to accept the suggestion of Birmingham. He hoped this Bill would be rejected. He should do his utmost to oppose it both on the Second Reading and in Committee, because he thought if there was one question more than another which ought to be dealt with by the Government it was this great question of rating which they were now invited to consider.

\*MR. A. F. GODSON (Kidderminster) said, he represented a constituency which took a great interest in this question, and he wanted to say just a few words on the subject. He was strongly in favour of the Bill now before the House. At the election the question was put to him whether, if returned, he would support a Bill of this description, and he said he was prepared to do so, and he was there that day to do it. They were perfectly

content with the law and the practice also, as they stood prior to the two decisions that had been referred to. Those decisions upset the system that had previously been carried out, and the promoters of the Bill only wanted to put things back as they had been prior to that time. All they desired was to do what was right and just between all parties. The view they put forward was that of the agriculturists of the country, as well as the manufacturers, and he would be sorry to learn that one party would do anything that could injure the other. They had been told that this was a Lancashire measure; but he could assure the House that other parts of the country were deeply interested. In the Midlands they feared that a further increase of charges would be made unless some final standard was fixed by law. He hoped the Bill would pass.

\*SIR G. OSBORNE MORGAN (Denbighshire, E.): I rise for the purpose of correcting a mistake made by one of the hon. Gentlemen who has spoken. I would point out that this question occupied us all day at a Wednesday Sitting in April last year, and the Report occupies 60 pages of *Hansard*. When the House divided, 232 voted for the Bill and 132 against. I can say also that a similar Bill was referred to a Select Committee four years ago—in 1889. The Committee sat from the 17th of March to the 20th of July; and I venture to think that never was a subject so thoroughly threshed out as this was before the Committee. My hon. Friend says truly that what we are trying to do is not to alter the law, but to bring it back to what it was before these decisions—before the Chard and the Tyne case. Well, in the Tyne case, Lord Esher laid it down that all machinery was to be rated that was put into a building for the purpose of making the building more fit for the purpose for which it was intended. A more loose decision than that I never heard of. Why, all machinery is put into buildings to make them more fit for the purpose for which they are intended. None would think of putting expensive machinery into a building for any other purpose.

SIR R. H. PAGET: It is put in for a particular purpose.

SIR G. OSBORNE MORGAN: That is exactly what I say. I expressed it shortly. Now, what was the result of that judgment? Why, in the different unions different views are taken, and you have no uniform system. We have one system in one county, and another in another county, and we have quite a different system to any prevailing in Scotland and Ireland. This is very injurious to all interests, and this Bill has been introduced with the object of preventing this and securing uniformity. I cannot conceive anything more injurious or more mischievous than want of uniformity in the administration of the law. The Bill would give us the uniformity we require. I sympathise entirely with my hon. Friend who spoke about agricultural depression; but has there been no industrial depression? I was down in Lancashire the other day, and I was told that things were never so bad as they are at present. The question is, What is the just course to adopt? I quite agree with the hon. Gentleman, who said that very few who were suffering from agricultural depression would be affected by this Bill. It may be said that we ought to bring in a general and exhaustive Bill, and deal with the whole question. It is always stated that you ought to bring in a more exhaustive Bill; that is the common argument when a measure of this kind is introduced. Then it is said the Government ought to bring in a Bill. I have no hopes that the Government will bring in a Bill; and I do not see why we should not try, if possible, to pass this Bill, leaving the details to Committee. Just one word about the speech of the hon. Member for South Birmingham. His proposal, I consider, is one for Committee and not for Second Reading, and I think it would be well if he would let the Bill be read a second time, and then refer it to the Grand Committee on Law and Trade. This would secure its becoming law in a proper shape.

\*MR. STANLEY LEIGHTON (Shropshire, Oswestry) said, the right hon. Baronet was a distinguished Member of the Committee to which he had alluded, which recommended that the Government, and not a private Member, should take charge of the Bill; but the Government did not take the matter up.

The Government declined to follow the suggestion of the Committee, and now he came to the House in his capacity as a Member to criticise the Judgment of Lord Esher. If the Judgment had been appealed against it could have been reviewed in the House of Lords, and altered if not good law. Why did not the right hon. Baronet and his friends take the case to the House of Lords? The fact was this Bill did not propose to amend or explain the law, but to change it altogether. Why had not the right hon. Gentleman the President of the Board of Trade and his friends undertaken to deal with this matter? According to a circular he had received, the right hon. Gentleman had told the promoters of the Bill that he would grant facilities for getting it through Committee on an early day. Why should such a Bill, however, be left to private Members, and why should the right hon. Gentleman anticipate the decision of the House? The rating authorities were said to be in favour of the Bill, but he could say that in his part of the country they were strongly against it, and they had passed resolutions against it. The agricultural constituencies and the farmers had always been appealing to this House for a reform of local taxation, but they could never succeed in getting any assistance from the gentlemen sitting on the opposite side of the House. And now the manufacturers demanded an Act of Parliament for the relief of themselves, and the Government supported them. He could not but describe the Bill as a rich man's Bill, the object of which was to remove burdens from the shoulders of the rich and to place them on the shoulders of the poor—to tax the small occupier, the farmer and the artisan, and to leave the capitalist scot-free. If the Bill were passed it would be for the advantage of the manufacturers, and certainly not for the advantage of the community. It was called a little Bill; but if it were a little Bill it would not have the enthusiastic support which was being accorded to it by the manufacturers. They knew very well its importance to themselves. The whole policy for many years past had been to extend the area of rating; and the Government would not even exclude elementary schools from the rating, whilst here they proposed to relieve one special

industry, in the hands of private persons, leaving all others in the lurch. This was against public policy, against the principle of local taxation reform, and it was still more against the interest of the whole agricultural community. He should vote against the Bill.

SIR G. OSBORNE MORGAN: I wish to correct the hon. Gentleman. I understood him to say that the Select Committee did not recommend the Bill to be passed. That was not the case. They wished that the Government should take it up.

MR. STANLEY LEIGHTON: That is what I said; the Government had not taken it up.

SIR G. OSBORNE MORGAN: They also agreed to report the Bill as amended to the House.

\*MR. MATHER (Lancashire, S.E., Gorton) said, some previous speakers had travelled very far from the question of local rating. There were two points in relation to the Bill to which he would direct the attention of the House. The Bill was a narrow and circumscribed measure, and its object was to relieve the country from a deadlock in the administration of rating for local purposes. It appeared that from the year 1840 to the year 1882 they had one uniform practice applied to those industries by which the country had secured its industrial position. During the intervening years Great Britain was pursuing her way in the progress of industry, and the custom that machinery should not be taxed prevailed. Then the question was raised by that ingenious gentleman, Mr. Headley, a surveyor in the North, that it was possible, under the Act of Parliament which had been in vogue for many years, to render machinery rateable, and not construe it to be goods and chattels, which were exempt. Immediately after this interpretation, which was supported by certain Courts, a case was brought in Scotland before Lord Frazer, who, in his Judgment with regard to it, was so clear and definite and precise that Scotland had since pursued the even tenor of its way; and the people, no matter what their occupations were, held to the old system. The learned Judge laid down that anything which was a tool or an instrument of manufacture in any premises belonging to the tenant or to the landlord, as the case might be, was not

subject to any rating whatsoever. Scotland, however, had not formed an example for England. There was another decision in this country—the Chard case—and this left the matter more confused and confounded than it had been before, for Lord Esher in that case withheld a decision upon the only point which would have given any light or guidance to the Assessment Committees throughout the country. He declared that, as he interpreted the law, machinery in a building ought to be taken into consideration when the rateable value of the building was fixed; but he carefully guarded himself against stating what the consideration was. On appeal another Judgment was given which did not add any enlightenment. Mr. Justice Grantham was most thoroughly confused as to what was machinery and what was a chattel in a manufactory. The result was that the Assessment Committees and others interested were of one mind—that the House of Commons alone could rid them of the difficulty. As the matter stood the decisions were most confusing. They would understand how they bore upon changes in the value of chattels and upon new inventions introduced in the process of manufacture. It was customary in Lancashire to take out of mills machinery that might be worth, say, £20,000, and to put in new machinery worth £40,000, and under Lord Esher's decision it would be possible to double the assessment on such new machinery. The Assessment Committees had held their hands for the past six or seven years waiting for Parliament to do something. It had been declared that this was a manufacturers' question, and that the object of the Bill was to relieve the manufacturers of a burden; but in Lancashire the manufacturers had never had the burden in question put upon them, though they clearly saw that until the Assessment Committees had some clear method by which they could adjust the assessment of machinery it was impossible for them to be sure that a new burden would not be cast on them. It was not so much what the manufacturers felt now as what they feared might be put on them in the future. What they asked the House to do was to decide two questions—first, by the Second Reading of the Bill to affirm that the law previous to the late legal

decisions had been for the advantage of the country; and, secondly, that the uncertainty of the new interpretation of the law since 1882 was so great that it left things in a worse condition than before. If the House accepted the Bill they would find that the manufacturing interests of the country would be dealt with in the same equitable manner as in former times. If the Bill were rejected, it was not so much the large manufacturer who would feel the burden of increased taxation as the small ones. Though he could not accept the peculiar metaphor of one hon. Member who had spoken—namely, that the manufacturers of the country were “rolling in molten gold,” he did not deny that some manufacturers were fairly prosperous. Some of them managed to pay their way, and to lay by a little money to buy improved machinery and employ more and more people. The great pride of many manufacturers of this country was not to hoard up money, but to invest their savings in the development of their manufactories, the employment of more hands, and the giving of shorter hours. But the small manufacturers who did not come within this category were likely to be seriously affected if the Bill did not pass, and if the Assessment Committees all along the line put in force the judicial decisions of which complaint was made—these small manufacturers who were earnestly desirous to make their way in the world, but who under this decision would find their machinery, tools, and implements taxed so heavily as to place them at a great disadvantage. He, therefore, appealed to the House on the ground of the uncertainty of the law, on the ground of the long usage before this uncertainty was declared, on the ground that the industry connected with the least affluent of all their fellows would be seriously affected if this ruling obtained in future—on all these grounds he appealed to the House to pass the Second Reading of the Bill by a larger majority than before.

\*MR. TOMLINSON said, there were many agricultural districts which would not be affected one way or the other by this Bill; but he thought that the agricultural districts which were affected ought to support it. It must be to the interest of those districts to encourage small village manufacturers; and yet if the Bill did

not pass those manufacturers would be in danger of being driven out of the field. The Chard case was an instance in point. There the Assessment Committee had been empowered to put upon lace-making machinery the full amount of rating due to the value of the machinery ; but when they came to the point they did not dare to rate the premises at much more than half the amount of the full value at which, by the decision in the case, they might have put the assessment. Those opponents of the Bill who represented industrial constituencies were in a small minority. The hon. Member for Chester-le-Street (Mr. Joicey) represented a small number of people, except with reference to one subject. They knew that he was an extensive owner of collieries, and no doubt a large number of persons interested in coal, in the hon. Member's part of the country, took a strong objection to this Bill. Surely it would be better for these gentlemen, instead of opposing the Bill, to propose a clause or bring in a Bill that would place the rating of collieries on a better footing. There was no description of property in which the rating showed greater inequalities throughout the country than collieries, and he would urge that hon. Member to consider what was the proper position in which to put this industry in that respect. The hon. Member, however, had raised a very important question. It would be a serious thing to diminish the security for money borrowed on the rates. But the real security was the prosperity of the town in which the rates were levied, and he believed that the prosperity of towns depended on the prosperity of the industries carried on in them. What would become of the prosperity of Gateshead, for instance, if the industrial pursuits of the place were interfered with ? We were competing in our manufactures with all the world, and here we were absolutely giving manufacturers an inducement to carry their operations over to foreign countries, where, in order to encourage trade, manufactories were freed from rates either wholly or in part. In America, not only were these advantages extended to the manufacturer, but free grants of land were given, and in some parts of Europe manufacturers were even subsidised by the State, in order to increase the stability of the country. It

*Mr. Tomlinson*

was of the utmost importance that they should prevent our manufacturers being handicapped by over-rating, and he would suggest in the case of the collieries that a Bill should be introduced, or a special clause inserted in the present Bill, providing for the rating of collieries on a fair and uniform system.

\***MR. T. H. BOLTON** (St. Pancras, N.) admitted that the Bill had received a considerable amount of support throughout the country, but could not help thinking that it had received support in some quarters through a misunderstanding as to its scope and effect. The short title of the measure had reference to "the rating of machinery," but really the Bill was one to relieve rateable premises occupied by machinery of certain portions of the rates put upon them. The impression, of course, was that tools, small machines, and movable articles used by the workman in his trade were liable to be rated under the existing law, and that the Bill was to prohibit that sort of thing. No doubt, under that impression a great many working-class organizations had joined in this movement, inaugurated by the manufacturers, and had been supporting the manufacturers. He held in his hand a Circular, issued by a very influential Trade Organization, in which it was pointed out that "the rating of movable machinery and tools constitutes a mischievous tax on labour." Those words were calculated to lead people to suppose that under the present law small hand machines, and tools were liable to be rated. He believed that under this misapprehension the promoters of the Bill had received a considerable amount of support throughout the country, which they otherwise would not have obtained. They had heard to-day of the interest the working man had in the question—they had heard it called a working man's question. Nothing of the kind. The manufacturer would not pay the workman a shilling more in wages because he (the manufacturer) was relieved from a certain amount of his rates ; on the contrary, the workman would suffer by it, inasmuch as the manufacturer would pocket the saving of his rates and put the burden on the small houses occupied by the workman. To talk about this being a workman's question was a mani-

fest absurdity. It was said that the law had recently been altered by the decision in the Chard case. But the Chard case, which followed up the Bishopwearmouth case, only carried out to their logical result well-understood principles of law that had been laid down long before that case. As far back as the time of Lord Denman it was laid down that the value of the occupation was enhanced by the presence of machinery—that was to say, that the articles which were more or less associated with a building should be taken into account in fixing the value of that building. Lord Campbell, following on Lord Denman, laid down the law very clearly. He said that the machinery attached to a building for the purposes of trade should be assessed according to its actual existing value, without considering whether it was real or personal property, or whether or not it was liable to distress or seizure. The late Lord Chief Justice Cockburn, following on that, said—

“When things which, though capable of being removed, are yet so far attached to a building as that it is intended that they should remain permanently connected with the purposes of the undertaking, and remain permanent appendages to it as essential to its working, they must be taken to be things which increase the value of the land.”

The Bishopwearmouth case, following on a line of cases, only laid down that in assessing shipbuilding premises to the poor rate the value of the machinery on the premises was to be taken into consideration in ascertaining their rateable value where such machinery, though some of it might be capable of being removed without injury to itself or the freehold, was essentially necessary to the shipbuilding business to which the premises were devoted. The Tyne Boiler case followed on the same line, and the Chard case only carried to their logical result those former decisions. To say that the existing law was new was therefore incorrect. The law as stated and enforced by all these decisions—which he ventured to say appealed to the common sense of the House—declared that premises were not to be taken as mere shells, but were to be assessed for purposes of rating combined with the machinery that was in them, that was associated with them as premises used for particular purposes and rateable accordingly.

As a matter of fact, the proposal of the Bill was that the manufacturers of the country whom the hon. Member below him (Mr. Mather) had admitted had been making money and were on comfortable terms, buying fresh land and erecting new machinery from time to time, should be relieved of the burdens that fairly fell upon them at the expense of the small shopkeepers and householders. It was not reasonable that an alteration should be made to relieve people who were well able to bear their fair share of local burdens. They were told that terrible things would happen if this Bill was not passed—that trade would leave the country, and all that sort of thing. Nothing of the kind would happen; the manufacturers would go on as usual, and would not think of putting their money in 3 per cent. bonds. They would buy new machinery, build new factories, and employ increasing numbers of people, just as they had done in the past. The measure was an unfair attempt on the part of the manufacturers to relieve themselves at the expense of the general community, therefore he opposed it.

\*MR. H. WRIGHT (Nottingham, S.) said, he wished to support the Bill in the interest of his constituents who were working men, from whom, during the last four years that this question had been to the front, he had never heard a word except in favour of the Bill. It was all nonsense to say that this was a rich man's question. The working men knew well enough that a little more pressure would drive our manufacturers into transferring their works from this country to France, Germany and elsewhere. And that with it would go their own means of livelihood, and that of thousands of women and girls employed in the Nottingham lace factories. They knew already that a great deal of trade had been driven away, and they did not want more to follow.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. H. H. FOWLER, Wolverhampton, E.): There is one point which has been made in the remarks that have fallen from hon. Members on both sides of the House with which I cordially concur, and that is that it is impossible for Her Majesty's Government to deal with the question

this Session. It would be holding out false hopes if I did not state that most distinctly. I think the time has arrived when, whether the Government deals with the question or not, the House of Commons should do so. The history of the case is shortly this. Up to within a very recent period of time there was a general impression prevailing among the overwhelming majority of rateable authorities in the Kingdom that a certain interpretation of the existing law was correct. When that interpretation was subjected to the criticism of the Courts, both the Queen's Bench, as it then was, presided over by Lord Chief Justice Cockburn, and then afterwards the Court of Appeal, presided over by the Master of the Rolls, decided that the generally received interpretation was wrong, and that property which had been up to that time, with the possible exception of some in places in the North of England, exempt from rating where rateable. Well, legislation was proposed in this House on the subject as far back as 1887. Bills were brought in in subsequent years, and in 1890, when the late Government was in power, the House gave a Second Reading to a Bill by 239 to 87. That was a Division in which the Government of the day took no part as a Government. The House was left to itself to decide the question, and I need hardly say that the House at that time was a strongly Conservative House. The question came up again in 1892, and in the Division 232 voted for the Bill, whilst 122 recorded their votes against it. Therefore, you have a very strong indication as to the opinion of Parliament—I do not say that this Bill, but, at all events, that some Bill is absolutely necessary to dispose of the difficulty that has arisen. Then we have had a Report from a Select Committee of 1887. The hon. Member who has just sat down, and several others, have assumed that the law is perfectly clear. That Select Committee, who considered the Bill, reported that

"Without going into the question as to whether the law relating to the rating of machinery has been altered by the recent decisions, it is clear from the evidence that the system acted upon by valuers in different parts of the country has varied considerably, and that the practice, in the absence of legislation, will in many cases be materially affected in the future. They consider it most important that there should be uniformity."

*Mr. H. H. Fowler*

That is a proposition with which I think all Members will agree. I do not think it proper myself that Assessment Committees should sit as Courts of Appeal on Judgments of Courts of Law. Whatever the law is, it ought to be carried out, and it is for Parliament to make an unjust law just. Last year Mr. Ritchie, who represented the Government, was asked—

"Was there any ground for supposing that the application of the law caused uncertainty and created difficulty? He thought the evidence was overwhelming, and therefore it was not necessary to elaborate the case."

One of the greatest lawyers who ever sat in the House of Commons (Sir Horace Davey) said—

"The present state of the law was unsatisfactory. It was incomprehensible to laymen and to lawyers, and it was uncertain in its operation. Uncertainty led to litigation, which had to be paid for by the litigants. Some assessment committees, while professing not to rate machinery, still considered it as enhancing the value of the premises, and the effect in some districts was that the value of the machinery was fully taken into account in the enhanced value of the premises. That appeared to him to be artificial and unsatisfactory. In the present condition of things there could be no doubt that the law ought to be defined and made clear and distinct and equal in its application to all parts of the country and all classes of the community."

That is the attitude the Government take on the Bill before the House. The Government are of opinion that the time has arrived when the law should be made clear, and they think the question of rating is emphatically one for what I may call the unbiased opinion of the House of Commons. There are differences of opinion on both sides of the House, and I venture to say, with all respect both to past and present Governments, that this is eminently a question in which the general sense of the House of Commons is perhaps the best judge we can possibly obtain as to what should be done. The hon. Member for Oswestry (Mr. Stanley Leighton) said I indicated that the Government would grant facilities for the further passage of this Bill. The hon. Member has not read an accurate report of what I said. What I said was that if this Parliament should, acting independently of political influences, and upon its own mature judgment, confirm the decision given over and over again by the last Parliament, I thought it was due to the ratepayers of

the country, it was due to the persons who would be affected by those changes, and it was due to the House of Commons itself, that the repeated decisions upon the question should, at all events, have a chance of being embodied in an Act. As far as the general question of rating is concerned, it is a very large question. My inclinations would be not to contract the area of rating. The desire of the Local Government Board is that the rating area should be as large as possible—that rates should be low, but that the product of rates should be large. It will, of course, be for the House of Commons to decide what is the best mode of carrying that out. I can only give my opinion that the present incidence of our rating is not satisfactory. I have said it on that side of the Table, and I say it on this side. I think our whole system of local taxation legislation has been a series of temporary measures, passed to meet temporary emergencies, that it has been botched from time to time and patched up from time to time, whilst very unfair subventions have been granted from time to time. But that is not the question before the House. The question now is a proved grievance, an existing uncertainty as to the state of the law, and the House of Commons is asked this afternoon to declare its opinion as to what the state of the law is.

Question put.

The House divided:—Ayes 287; Noes 134.—(Division List, No. 23.)

Main Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read a second time, and committed for Wednesday, 5th April.

PARLIAMENTARY FRANCHISE (WOMEN)  
BILL.—(No. 21.)

SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."—(*Mr. C. M'Laren.*)

SIR H. JAMES (Bury, Lancashire), in view of the lateness of the hour (25 minutes past 5), moved the adjournment of the Debate.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Debate be now adjourned."—(*Sir H. James.*)

Question put, and agreed to.

Debate adjourned till To-morrow.

FIRE BRIGADE (EXEMPTION FROM  
JURY SERVICE) BILL.—(No. 47.)

SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."—(*Viscount Curzon.*)

\*THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Sir CHARLES RUSSELL, Hackney, S.): I do not think the Bill is one which ought to be read a second time without some explanation of its provisions being advanced by the hon. Member in whose name it stands. If there are to be further exemptions they must be much more widely extended than they are in the Bill. There are large classes of subjects of the Crown now liable to serve as jurors who have as strong a claim to exemption as those persons proposed to be exempted by the hon. Member. Under the circumstances, I beg to move that the Debate be now adjourned.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Debate be now adjourned."—(*Sir Charles Russell.*)

\*VISCOUNT CURZON appealed to the hon. Gentleman to allow this Bill to proceed. The measure had supporters in every quarter of the House, and if passed it would be the first recognition by Parliament of the services performed by firemen in the cause of saving life and property. He was confident that no one whose name was on the back of the Bill would wish it to pass in an unfair or improper way; but as he thought it was the general wish of the House that the matter should come before Parliament in the form in which he presented it he hoped the Government would allow the Bill to pass that stage.

Question put, and agreed to.

Debate adjourned till To-morrow.

SUPPLY—REPORT.

Resolution [7th March] reported.



## NAVY ESTIMATES, 1893-4.

"That 76,700 men and boys be employed for the Sea and Coast Guard Services for the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1894, including 15,005 Royal Marines."

\*MR. A. C. MORTON (Peterborough): I wish, Sir, to ask why the Navy Appropriation Accounts—without which the matter cannot be fully discussed—were not circulated this year before the Vote was taken? Last year we got them on the 26th February, some days before the Vote was taken.

THE SECRETARY TO THE ADMIRALTY (Sir U. KAY-SHUTLEWORTH, Lancashire, Clitheroe): I cannot give the hon. Member the information he requires, as the Secretary to the Treasury is not here, but I will cause inquiry to be made.

Resolution agreed to.

## BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE—SUPPLY.

Order for Supply read.

MR. JAMES LOWTHER (Kent, Thanet): What Business is to be taken in the way of Supply to-morrow?

MR. MARJORIBANKS (Berwickshire): It is the intention of the Government to take the Army Estimates to-morrow, and they propose to take the same course as in the case of the Navy Estimates with regard to the Twelve o'clock Rule.

MR. POWELL WILLIAMS: Will the Supplementary Estimates also be taken to-morrow?

MR. MARJORIBANKS: We shall take as many as we can.

VISCOUNT CRANBORNE (Rochester): I presume the Supplementary Estimates will not be proceeded with very late at night.

MR. MARJORIBANKS: Oh, no.

MR. BARTLEY: Would it not be simpler to do away with the Twelve o'clock Rule altogether?

MR. MARJORIBANKS: No.

SUPPLY—Committee deferred till To-morrow.

## HOUSE OF COMMONS ACCOMMODATION.

MR. SPEAKER: Does the hon. Member for Northampton move his Resolution on this subject?

MR. LABOUCHERE: No, Sir. Perhaps I may be allowed to state that the Government are not prepared to agree to this Committee, and, therefore, I shall not be able to move it as an Unopposed Motion. As I understand, my right hon. Friend the Chief Commissioner of Works is of opinion that it would be desirable to have a discussion upon the matter in the House. Personally, I should think that something of a waste of time; but, in the circumstances, perhaps the best course open to me would be to raise the question by moving the reduction of my right hon. Friend's salary upon the first Vote on Account.

## JURORS' REMUNERATION BILL.

(No. 182.)

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Clause 1.

Committee report Progress; to sit again To-morrow.

## REFORMATORY SCHOOLS (SCOTLAND) BILL.—(No. 202.)

Read the third time, and passed.

## PUBLIC HEALTH (LONDON) BILL.

On Motion of Sir Henry Roscoe, Bill to amend and extend "The Public Health (London) Act, 1891," ordered to be brought in by Sir Henry Roscoe, Sir Albert Rollit, Mr. Bousfield, Mr. Howell, and Mr. Lawson.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 254.]

## CHIMNEY SWEEPERS BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Labouchere, Bill to make better provision for the registration and regulation of Chimney Sweepers, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Labouchere, Mr. Bartley, Sir Richard Paget, and Mr. Philip Stanhope.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 255.]

## PUBLIC PETITIONS COMMITTEE.

Third Report brought up, and read; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed.

## POST OFFICE (ACQUISITION OF SITES) BILL.

Bill reported; Report to lie upon the Table, and to be printed.

Minutes of Proceedings to be printed. [No. 106.]

Bill re-committed for To-morrow, and to be printed. [Bill 256.]

House adjourned at twenty minutes before Six o'clock.

## HOUSE OF LORDS,

*Thursday, 9th March 1893.*

Earl of Ravensworth—Took the Oath.

ARCHDEACONRY OF CORNWALL BILL  
[H.L.]—(No. 19.)

## SECOND READING.

Order of the Day for the Second Reading, read.

THE EARL OF MOUNT-EDGCUMBE said, as this Bill had been passed four times in their Lordships' House without Division (though not without discussion) he would not say more on this occasion, than simply move that the Bill be read a second time.

Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2<sup>a</sup>."  
—(*The Earl of Mount-Edgcumbe.*)

Motion agreed to; Bill read 2<sup>a</sup> accordingly, and committed to a Committee of the whole House to-morrow.

## COINAGE (No. 2) BILL—(No. 28.)

## SECOND READING.

Order of the Day for the Second Reading, read.

Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2<sup>a</sup>."  
—(*The Lord Kensington.*)

Motion agreed to; Bill read 2<sup>a</sup> accordingly, and committed to a Committee of the whole House to-morrow.

VOLUNTARY CONVEYANCES BILL.  
(No. 20.)

## SECOND READING.

Order of the Day for the Second Reading, read.

\*LORD MACNAGHTEN said, if he were moving the Second Reading of this Bill in an assembly of lawyers, it would not be necessary to say anything by way of apology or introduction; but as their Lordships were, perhaps, not familiar with the mysteries of English law, and the nice distinctions which had grown up between real and personal property, he would shortly explain the object of the measure and the grounds on which he recommended it to the House.

There was one distinction between real and personal property, singular in its application and in its origin, which their Lordships might not be aware of. A man of full age and competent understanding, not under duress or undue influence, but acting of his own free will, might make a gift of personal estate which he could not afterwards revoke or defeat; that was not quite the case with regard to real estate. If a man competent to deal with his property made a gift or settlement by way of gift of real estate he could not indeed revoke it afterwards—that the law did not allow—he could not recall the gift and take back the property, but he might do what was practically the same thing—he might defeat and destroy the gift to any extent he pleased, if he was not ashamed to do so. In parting with the property he might have acted from the highest, the best, and the purest motives; he might have been impelled by the force and pressure of moral obligations which he could not resist; it might have been a provision for a child, a wife, or a parent, but the law paid no regard to such considerations; the law held that those considerations were not valuable; the conveyance was voluntary, and the persons taking under it were mere volunteers; and the author of a voluntary conveyance who had already parted once with his property for nothing might part with it again if he took care to get something for it, and then he might put the price in his own pocket, and disappoint and laugh at the person to whom he had given the property, and from whom he had taken it away, without any amends or recompense. And what was more extraordinary still, he might deal, by way of sale or mortgage, with a person who knew all the circumstances, and who knew that the property was no longer his, and that person might safely take a conveyance of the property, and keep it. The law would hold that he had done nothing wrong in colluding with the author of the voluntary conveyance to defeat his solemn instrument. That was, perhaps, a startling proposition—that one man might honestly sell what was not his, and keep the price, and another, knowing all the circumstances, might honestly help him to rob the owner—a proposition,

he should think, puzzling to a lay mind, and to a legal mind not wholly satisfactory ; but it was undoubtedly the law. But how did it come to be the law ? It was not drawn from any maxim of the Common Law, nor was it derived from any doctrine of equity (anything more inequitable could not be imagined), nor was it to be found in any Act that was, or ever had been, in the Statute Book ; it was Judge-made law, pure and simple. There was, too, this singular feature about it : that whereas as regarded Judge-made law generally we knew who the Judge was that made the law or laid down the principle on which it was founded, all that was known in this case was that some Judge, whose name could not be ascertained, at some time which could not be fixed, had discovered that that was the proper construction and true interpretation of an Act of Parliament now 300 years old, which said nothing of the kind. In the reign of Queen Elizabeth two famous Statutes were passed, one for the protection of creditors and the other for the protection of purchasers. With the former this Bill had nothing to do ; it did not affect the rights of creditors, whether enforceable by any process of law or arising in bankruptcy. The Statute referred to in the Bill was the Statute for the Protection of Purchasers, 27 Eliz. cap. 4. Though the language was involved, the meaning of that Statute was clear enough. It dealt only with conveyances "meant and intended by the parties that so make the same to be fraudulent and covenous," and declared all conveyances of land

"made for the intent and of purpose to defraud and deceive"

such persons as purchased the same lands

"to be utterly void, frustrate, and of none effect."

In order to show the sort of Acts struck at by the Statute, the 3rd section provided that if anybody had the hardihood to maintain, justify, or defend such conveyances he should forfeit one year's rent of the land so conveyed and suffer imprisonment for six months. That was the Act upon which so very singular a construction had been placed. But that construction was not accepted at once. From time to time when cases arose of an honest conveyance followed by a conveyance for value intended to defeat it, some Judges said the first con-

veyance was honest, and the second fraudulent, and there were two lines of authorities. Ultimately, in 1807, the question came before Lord Ellenborough in the Queen's Bench, and after going through the authorities, he came to the conclusion that the preponderance of authority was in favour of declaring the first conveyance fraudulent and the second honest. From that time that had been held to be the law. But for all that, Judges had not thought the result satisfactory altogether, and had said that was not the construction which they would themselves have placed upon the Act of Parliament ; but they had also said that the law had become so fixed that the legislature alone could interfere with it. For example, Sir William Grant, one of our greatest lawyers, observed in one case—

"I have great difficulty to persuade myself that the words of this Statute warrant, or that the purpose of it requires, such a construction, for it is not easy to conceive that a purchaser can be defrauded by a settlement of which he has notice before he makes the purchase."

It should be mentioned that in America, where this Statute had been accepted either tacitly or by direct legislation, the construction placed upon it in this country had not been adopted. There it was held that a voluntary conveyance was good against a subsequent conveyance for value when the purchaser had notice of the earlier deed. Enough had been said to explain the purport of this Bill ; and, as an instance of the hardship now inflicted by the law, reference might be made to a case before the Privy Council two or three years ago. A lady, possessed of considerable real property, had married, having an illegitimate son by her intended husband. A settlement was made on the wife for life, on the husband for life, and then on the children of the intended marriage, and a fair and reasonable settlement was made by the same instrument upon the illegitimate child and his issue. Some years afterwards, however, the lady changed her mind, and, in collusion with a purchaser, she defeated the interest of her son's children. That case was brought before the Privy Council because there had been decisions in this country which seemed to show that in a case of that kind a fair and honest settlement would be upheld ; but, unfortun-

nately, in the result the honest settlement was declared fraudulent, and the appeal was dismissed with costs. All he asked was that their Lordships should restore the real meaning of the Act of Elizabeth, not declaring fraudulent perfectly honest conveyances. It was to be regretted that Judges and, in some instances, even Acts of Parliament, should have created constructive and artificial frauds. Surely the fraud was on the part of those who colluded to defeat an honest and fair settlement. He apologised for having trespassed so far on their Lordships' time, but it seemed a serious thing to ask the House to alter a rule of law which had prevailed so long; and he had, therefore, thought it right to explain the grounds on which he asked them to do so. He begged to move the Second Reading of the Bill.

Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2<sup>a</sup>.  
—(*The Lord Macnaghten.*)

THE LORD CHANCELLOR (Lord HERSHELL): My Lords, I certainly do not intend to offer any opposition to the Second Reading of this Bill. I quite concur in the view of my noble and learned Friend that a change in the law is desirable and necessary. My attention, however, has been directed quite recently to the question whether the rights of creditors in a case of bankruptcy would be completely secured, and whether they might not be interfered with by this Bill. I express no opinion upon it. The matter has come to my attention so recently that I have not had time to consider it; but I know that some of the heads of Public Departments and those before whom bankruptcy matters come, desire that some little time should be given by my noble and learned Lord before the Committee stage for the consideration of that question. He will agree with me that in dealing with a law which has so long existed, it is necessary to carefully consider the provisions of the Bill in order to be quite sure that the result obtained will not go beyond what he intends.

\*LORD ASHBOURNE: My Lords, I personally concur with the views which had been so clearly set forth to your Lordships by my noble and learned Friend in presenting this Bill for your acceptance, but I am quite of the opinion which my noble and learned Friend on

the Woolsack has expressed, that some little time should be allowed to elapse before the next stage of the Bill is proceeded with, as I should like to have the opportunity of taking the opinion of the Judges in Ireland as to whether the Bill should deal with the Irish kindred Statute, the 10 Chas. I.

LORD MACNAGHTEN said, he would be most happy to postpone the further consideration of the Bill for such time as the noble and learned Lord on the Woolsack thought right.

Motion agreed to; Bill read second time accordingly, and committed to a Committee of the Whole House.

#### SALE OF GOODS BILL.—(No. 8.)

Amendments reported (according to Order), and Bill to be read the third time to-morrow.

#### TRADE UNION PROVIDENT FUNDS

BILL.—(No. 21.)

Read the third time (according to Order), and passed.

#### COUNTY MAGISTRATES.

##### QUESTION. OBSERVATIONS.

\*THE DUKE OF ST. ALBANS asked if the Return being prepared by the Home Office relative to appointments of County Magistrates in England and Wales would be laid before Parliament; and in what form it would be presented? He said he had put this question on the Paper in consequence of an answer given in another place that the Report would give full particulars of the political opinions of County Magistrates. As it was difficult to see any connection between the business of Petty Sessions and the performance of political duties, he hoped the Lord Chancellor would be able to inform the House that it was not the intention of Her Majesty's Government to place County Magistrates on the rack and to extract from them a statement of their political opinions, and how they had voted at the General Election. That would be so improper a course that he hoped the Home Office did not contemplate insisting upon any such questions or particulars.

THE LORD CHANCELLOR: My Lords, the Returns which the noble Duke refers to were consented to by Her Majesty's Government in the House of

Commons upon the motion of two Members, one sitting on the Government side, and the other on the opposite side of that House. They are the continuation of Returns which have already been granted in previous years, and furnish no novel information. They give the addresses, description or profession, qualification, and there is a heading for remarks, which, as far as I have seen, have reference only to the question of residence or non-residence. That is the entire substance of this Return. The other asks for the date of appointment. Those were the only Returns consented to by the Government, and they are in preparation. I do not think this is a convenient time for entering upon the question of the constitution of the County Benches from a political point of view. I quite agree with the noble Duke that a man's politics does not make him more or less fit to exercise the duties of a Magistrate; but, at the same time, I think there are reasons why it would be desirable if it could be avoided that there should not be a great preponderance of one set of opposing political opinions upon the Bench, because it might be supposed that the composition of a Bench of Magistrates of one particular political opinion had some connection with the decisions given. I do not enter into the question of this preponderance, or the reasons which had led to it, inasmuch as the noble Duke has said it is quite immaterial what are the opinions of those who occupy the Bench; but I thought it right to say there is a point of view from which it does become material, and that if you find the political complexion of the Bench is entirely opposed to the general political views prevailing in any particular part of the country or in any particular county, such a state of things has its disadvantages; and I think everybody would agree that is the case whatever may be the preponderating political views of the Magistrates on the Bench or of the people who differ from them.

\*THE MARQUESS OF SALISBURY: My Lords, I rather regret that the noble and learned Lord does not see his way to give us at an early period the explanation at which he is glancing, and which I think is very much required in the present state of public opinion on the subject, from rumours which have been going about. Unless I am greatly misinformed,

the noble and learned Lord has undertaken in addition to the task of regulating the conscience of the Crown, which we know is his Constitutional prerogative, to regulate the consciences of all the Lord Lieutenants in the country, and he has been pressing them to do what hitherto the more conscientious, and I hope all, Lord Lieutenants have carefully abstained from doing, that is to make appointments on political grounds, and in the direction of the politics which are favoured by the noble and learned Lord. I should be very glad if the noble and learned Lord would break the silence he has observed and let us know how he is exercising these powers which are certainly novel, and which may obviously lead to great abuse. I am afraid his motives will be very much misunderstood; and I doubt very much whether Lord Lieutenants generally will be ready to accept and to submit to this novel discipline to which he has endeavoured to subject them. I am told there are precedents upon which the noble and learned Lord can act for appointing Magistrates of counties without asking for the recommendation of the Lord Lieutenants; but of course if he does that we must expect to see in the county lists one set of Magistrates in a separate list from another: one set of Magistrates appointed by the Lord Lieutenants on the ground of their general competence for the duties they have to fulfil, and another set of Magistrates appointed on the ground of their political opinions. I cannot think that is a desirable result. Of course we know why the difference has arisen. A certain separation took place in the Party opposite, and many Magistrates who had been known as Liberals became known as Liberal-Unionists instead; and if we choose to add the Liberal-Unionists to the Conservatives I have no doubt that would give a large preponderance on the Benches. I am not speaking of what the result of such a state of things would be. My own impression is that Magistrates have always been too careful to keep their judicial duties and their political views much too separate from each other for such a state of things to arise: and I think the noble and learned Lord might very well let well alone. I do not know by what motives he has been actuated, but I repeat that in the public interest

information on this subject is to be desired.

THE LORD CHANCELLOR: I should have thought the noble Marquess might have waited for that information without making this attack upon me upon most imperfect and inaccurate information without any notice to me that such an attack was to be made, because that really is what the noble Marquess has done. I did not come into the House prepared with the materials to go fully into the subject on the present occasion, and I can only say if the noble Marquess represents my action with regard to the Lord Lieutenants as it has been represented to him my action has been misrepresented. I do not propose to go fully into the matter now, but after what the noble Marquess has said perhaps your Lordships will indulge me for a moment. There is nobody who would be less desirous than I should be to introduce unnecessary politics into appointments to the Magisterial Bench, or any other appointments whatsoever; but whether naturally or unnaturally—I think very naturally—there is grievous irritation and discontent existing in many parts of the country from the belief that the Magistrates have been appointed because they belong to one political Party, whilst persons perfectly fit and competent, not competent merely on account of their politics, but competent to fulfil the duties of Magistrates on the Bench have been passed over because their politics have not been of the description required. I am not going into the question of how far that opinion is just or unjust; I think the grounds for it are not as real as many of those who have entered into this subject believe—I do not myself regard them as so real. But one cannot shut one's eyes to the fact that this feeling did exist. The noble Marquess has said that it would be in the power of the Lord Chancellor to put anybody he pleased upon the Bench. That is a question I would rather not discuss at the present time, for one would have to go somewhat elaborately into the matter. There is, no doubt, a question as to the manner in which that power has been ordinarily exercised, but I do not think this is a convenient time for going into that question. But, assuming there was that power in the Lord Chancellor to appoint whom he pleased, I desire to

say that I did not in the slightest degree desire to dictate to any Lord Lieutenant the appointment of any person whose name would be brought before him. I transmitted to the Lord Lieutenants in certain cases names which had been suggested to me, where there was a great preponderance of any one political opinion upon the Bench, but I left it to the Lord Lieutenant in every case to inquire into the circumstances, and to ascertain whether they were fit persons, and I never suggested that he should recommend to me any one of them if he thought them unfit; on the contrary, I suggested to him that he should only recommend to me such of them as he thought proper. And as my ground for doing so, I called attention to the state of opinion which prevailed upon the subject, and that in my opinion it was not expedient that people should think the magistrates were only taken from one side, even though that view might not be as just as they supposed. Therefore I asked them to take the matter into their consideration, and to consider the claims of those persons who had been suggested to me as fit persons to perform magisterial duties on the Bench, and I left it to them, if they thought fit, to recommend them to me. In some instances this has been done. I am not going into all the cases, but those were the steps I took. The communications I made to the Lord Lieutenants were made in a friendly spirit, and in every case, from their replies to me, were accepted in that spirit. It was not an official communication, and it was not done with any view of dictating to the Lord Lieutenants the action they should take, but simply inviting them, in concert with the Lord Chamberlain, to say whether the Bench could not be so constituted as to give general satisfaction. All I have to say is that it seems to me in doing that I have done nothing wrong. The noble Marquess has said that the preponderance has only come into existence in consequence of a division in the Liberal Party. That is entirely a misapprehension. If, instead of adding the Liberal Unionists to the Conservatives, you add the Liberal Unionists to the Liberals, that preponderance will be still impossible in almost any county in England, and therefore the question of preponderance does not arise in the way the noble Marquess has suggested. I believe

that for the most part the state of things has not arisen from any partisan action on the part of the Lord Lieutenants, and I have never suggested that the Lord Lieutenants have purposely put upon the Bench those who were of their own political views. What has certainly appeared to me to be the case is that in certain counties, at all events, the Lord Lieutenants have too generally accepted nominations of the local Benchmen, and the local Benchmen I do not believe to have been in all cases as free from political feeling and political bias as the Lord Lieutenants to whom those recommendations have been made. There has prevailed in many counties a sort of co-optation of the magistrates. But the appointment is after all with the Lord Chancellor, and the Lord Lieutenant recommends to him; but if the Lord Lieutenant is to be merely a conduit-pipe through whom the local Benchmen are to nominate the magistrates, that does not appear to me to be a desirable system, and if that view has been communicated to the Lord Lieutenants by any action I have taken, it appears to me it is a very desirable view to convey to them. As I have said, I did not come prepared to enter into a discussion upon this subject. I believe that persons outside this House who are not subject to the same potent influences as the noble Marquess will believe that in these matters I have acted in a friendly spirit towards the Lord Lieutenants, with the view of bringing about as satisfactory a state of things as could be brought about, and, if possible, of satisfying public opinion without any violent change, and it has not been with the motive, as the noble Marquess has insinuated, of placing magistrates of my own political views upon the Bench, because all the Lord Lieutenants have stated that if they had called upon every person whom I suggested they would have put the party I represent in a minority decidedly small.

THE EARL OF NORTHBROOK did not wish to continue the discussion upon the more general question, but would ask the noble and learned Lord whether the House was to understand that the Return would have anything to do in any respect with the politics of the magistrates; that in the column for remarks it was not intended that their politics should be

stated, but that it was merely the continuation of the old Return? He hoped there was no political intention whatever in the Return now moved for.

THE LORD CHANCELLOR: No doubt that is so. As far as I know, the Return will be filled up by the authority to whom it is addressed exactly as in the old way. It contains no new heading or statement of politics. No new subject will be contained in the Return. With regard to the question of the politics of the magistrates, in making the statement I did I, of course, had no Return to go by, and it was derived from information sent me by those with whom I communicated, and who were dissatisfied with the constitution of the Bench. I do not suppose it was literally accurate, but all I can say is that it was not from any Return, either in existence or in preparation, that I derived the information I have.

#### IMMIGRATION INQUIRY.

##### QUESTION. OBSERVATIONS.

THE EARL OF DUNRAVEN asked Her Majesty's Government for information as to the nature of the inquiry to be undertaken by the two Commissioners from the Board of Trade recently sent to the United States to examine into immigration in that country; and as to the instructions given to them. He presumed this Board of Trade inquiry had reference to the question of immigration into this country. He had seen a statement that one of the Commissioners was Mr. Burnett, whose name was familiar to the House as Labour Correspondent of the Board of Trade, than whom it would be impossible to find anyone better qualified to undertake such an inquiry as far as labour was concerned, though possibly in other branches of the subject he might not be so well fitted to act. The other Commissioner, he understood, was Mr. Schloss, whose name probably was not equally so well known, and he wished to be informed whether that gentleman was also in the employ of the Board of Trade, or whether he had been selected for this particular mission on account of some special qualification or fitness? It was difficult to understand what information Her Majesty's Government expected to obtain that was not already accessible in the Reports of various Committees and Commissions,

Consular Reports, and other evidence of the kind, and he would ask what the exact Reference of the Commissioners was, and what the nature and scope of the Inquiry was to be. The House and the country regarded the subject as of importance, and it was desirable some information should be given with regard to it.

\***LORD PLAYFAIR** said the noble Lord had probably seen that a Return had been made in another place of the actual letter of instructions issued to the Commissioners, but, if not, it should of course be placed before the House as an unopposed Return. Possibly the noble Lord merely wished to draw out a short statement of the nature and object of sending out the Commissioners to the United States. A considerable amount of alarm had arisen, shared apparently by the noble Lord, from his remarks in the Draft Report of the Sweating Committee, from the supposed number of destitute aliens who had come to this country in recent years. In the Census of 1891 the total number of foreigners of all kinds in this country, including all possessed of means of their own, or earning a subsistence by trade, was singularly small—under 200,000. This number, however, had not excited alarm; the alarm was due to the increase among the Russian and Polish Jews, who came here in a state of poverty and with habits and customs which were not understood by our people, but their numbers were not so great as some imagined. The average number of Polish and Russian Jews, of Germans and Austrians, who came into the country was nearly 5,000 a year; but the number rose in 1891 to 10,000, though the number in 1892, not yet, however, complete, did not exceed about 7,000. The Board of Trade desired to obtain information from the United States, which had a larger experience, derived from the larger numbers of Russian and Polish Jews entering that country. In 1891 the number of Russian and Polish Jews entering the United States was 100,236, and in 1892 the number was 79,156. As America had tenfold the number of such immigrants that we had, she had tenfold the experience that we had of them. It was therefore desired to find out how these immigrants conducted themselves on their arrival there, and how far they were destitute of the means of living. It was thought that the best way

to obtain useful information was to send out Commissioners to make specific inquiries. The existing law of the United States, and proposals which are before Congress, may largely affect the emigration from this country, and the Government desired to know the tendency of feeling in the United States, and what was likely to be its action in the future. There was an influential party, headed by politicians of high repute, including General Walker, one of the highest authorities there, which advocated the total prohibition of immigration into the United States. It was impossible to conceive that that party could succeed in obtaining total prohibition, because a constant stream of immigrants seemed to be essential to the industries of the country. In the New England States one-half the population were immigrants or of foreign birth, and they performed almost all the labour. The immigration into the New England States included 40,000 Canadians annually. The Government desired to know what was likely to be the effect of restrictions upon emigration from this country, and upon emigration from Canada, for these French Canadians already formed one-tenth of the population in the New England States. All the menial labour was performed, and almost all the railways in the United States had been built, by foreigners; nearly all the mines were worked by them; much of the domestic labour was done by them; and he, therefore, could not think the Government there would go so far as total prohibition, which would be very serious to us, as our emigrants to that country numbered 88,000 annually. The United States law already authorised the sending back of immigrants who could not earn their own livelihood, but the numbers so sent back had only been 99 in 1890, 57 in 1891, 170 in 1892. As absolute prohibition or increased restrictive law was likely to have a great influence upon this country, and on Canada especially, it was desirable we should know what had been the restrictions upon foreign immigration, especially that of Russian and Polish Jews, and with regard to the subject generally. He did not know the official position of Mr. Schloss, but was assured that he was a very competent person to assist in such an inquiry. He was to inquire specially into the laws



of the United States and their administration, and Mr. Burnett was to inquire into the economic effect of that portion of the immigration which was of a destitute character from the East of Europe, and from England. The Report was to be ready by July next.

\***LORD DE RAMSEY** wished to know whether arrangements of last Session were being continued in this country to note the number of immigrants who remained here, and the number who passed through on their way to America; and, also, whether a record is kept of Jews landing in this country, who, we are told, do not come on the rates, they being looked after by the Jewish Boards of Guardians?

**LORD PLAYFAIR** said that these statistics were carefully compiled by Mr. Giffen, and would be found in the last Report on Emigration from the Board of Trade.

**THE EARL OF DUNRAVEN** said, that complete inquiries of so extensive a character could not be made, and the results embodied in a Report, by July next. In the meantime, as the matter was one of importance to this country, he should take an opportunity of calling attention to it at a future date.

#### POLICE PROTECTION TO SHERIFFS IN IRELAND.

##### QUESTION. OBSERVATIONS.

\***LORD ASHBOURNE** asked Her Majesty's Government whether they would lay upon the Table copies of the circulars regulating the giving of police protection to Sheriffs in Ireland in operation (1) on 22nd August 1892, (2) on 1st January 1893, and (3) at the present time? He said that, in the discussions which had taken place in that and in the other House, reference had been made to those circulars, and it had been stated by the Government that when they came into Office in August last they found in existence a circular which violated the law. Mr. J. Morley had replaced that by another circular, which undoubtedly fell into the same error, and in due time that again had been succeeded by another. If the Government had confined their statements to what they had done themselves, and what they believed to be the law, the matter might not have assumed a controversial character, but the line

taken was to allege that the late Government had violated the law, he supposed in ignorance, and that during the tenure of Office by Mr. A. J. Balfour, and subsequently, there were 720 instances of police protection to illegal seizures. In answer to questions elsewhere that number had dwindled down to 66. Under those circumstances he wished to have the matter placed in a position for further discussion. He was informed by those competent to judge that the circular of the late Government was not open to the charge made against it, but was, on the contrary, entirely within the law. He wished to know whether there was any further reduction on the figures he had given, and whether the Government had decided to appeal against the decision of the Court of Appeal?

**THE FIRST LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY (Earl SPENCER):** My Lords, I wish the noble and learned Lord had given me notice of his later questions. I am quite unable to answer them without it. With regard to the other, the Government do not think that the mere production of those three circulars would adequately represent the state of the case in reference to recent Sheriffs' seizures; but they will be very happy to lay on the Table of the House all the circulars referring to this matter which have been issued since 1837. That would enable your Lordships to have fully before you the whole facts of the case, and will, I presume, as the Returns asked for would be included, satisfy the noble and learned Lord.

**LORD ASHBOURNE** said, if the noble Earl would show him the list he would say whether it would answer his purpose. Before modifying the question he was going to put, he had thought it more courteous to ask the Government to voluntarily lay on the Table the three circulars themselves, and instead of doing so, the noble Earl told him he might have a bundle of circulars stretching over half a century; but he would state from the list, if furnished, what would answer his purpose.

#### LUNACY INSPECTORS (IRELAND).

##### QUESTION. OBSERVATIONS.

\***LORD ASHBOURNE** asked Her Majesty's Government whether the Lunacy Inspectors in Ireland had as yet presented their Report for the year 1892

to the Lord Chancellor of Ireland; and, if not, to explain what was the cause of such a long delay. He said the Lord Chancellor of Ireland, under the Queen's Sign Manual, was entrusted with the care, custody, and control of the persons and property of idiots and lunatics in Ireland, and under a variety of Statutes was directly charged with the oversight of property and persons of lunatics in private asylums. Pursuant to statutory requirements the Lunacy Inspectors were bound to furnish the Lord Chancellor in Ireland annually with Reports in reference to such lunatics, and he wished to know whether that requirement had been complied with for 1892, and, if not, the cause of so long a delay. Before leaving Office he received, in June or July, the Report for the previous year, and he understood the Reports would be made with more celerity to meet the dates fixed by Statute. This was not a controversial matter. He was sure the present Lord Chancellor of Ireland was as anxious to carry out the duties cast upon him in this melancholy relationship.

EARL SPENCER: As the noble and learned Lord has said, this is not a controversial matter. Inquiries are being made as to the cause of the delay. I am informed that the Inspectors' Report for 1891 was only presented to the Lord Chancellor in 1893, and that the difficulty arose through a strike of printers. We will inquire further into the matter. Of course the Government are anxious to carry out the provisions of the law with regard to these Returns.

LORD ASHBOURNE said he had insisted upon this matter when Lord Chancellor, and as the delay had been so great he would ask the question again on Thursday.

#### STATUTE LAW REVISION BILLS.

Message from the Commons that they concur in the Resolution of this House communicated to them on the 27th of February last on the subject of Statute Law Revision Bills of the present Session, as desired by this House.

#### REFORMATORY SCHOOLS (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Brought from the Commons; read 1<sup>st</sup>; and to be printed. (No. 29.)

House adjourned at half-past Five o'clock till To-morrow, a quarter-past Ten o'clock.

## HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Thursday, 9th March 1893.

### PRIVATE BUSINESS.

MIDLAND AND GREAT NORTHERN RAILWAY COMPANIES (EASTERN AND MIDLAND RAILWAY) BILL (*by Order*).

#### SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."

\*MR. WEIR (Ross and Cromarty): I oppose this Bill in consequence of the action of the Associated Railway Companies in raising their rates and charges, which is having a very serious effect on industrial and commercial undertakings in this country. This policy, adopted by the Railway Companies, so that they may pay 6, 7, and 7½ per cent. dividends to their shareholders, is seriously detrimental to the public interests. I am not one of those who think that shareholders should not have fair interest on their money, but I look forward to the time when the Liberal Government, which professes to be the champion of progress, will think it desirable to absorb the Railway Companies, and guarantee the shareholders fixed dividends of 2½ per cent., and after 1905, when Consols will pay only 2½ per cent., will guarantee them dividends at that rate. These large dividends are simply disastrous to our agricultural and manufacturing enterprise, and I hope the President of the Board of Trade will put his foot down in dealing with the Railway Directors, and let them understand that the welfare of the community has to be considered as well as the interests of the shareholders. I read in *The Daily News* of to-day that—

"The Chairman of the Great Eastern Railway Company, Mr. Parkes, has informed Mr. Mundella that the Directors of the Company have instructed the officers so to arrange the Company's rates and charges as to bring them, as far as possible, in accord with the rates charged to traders and others before 1st January 1893."

I am glad to find they have taken a step in that direction, no doubt

in consequence of the Resolution of this House last Friday night, and the statement made by the President of the Board of Trade on that occasion. But Mr. Parkes winds up his remarks by stating—

“The Directors reserve the right of moderately increasing certain rates when trade and agriculture revive.”

Well, what do Railway Directors call moderate rates? I suppose those which will ensure  $6\frac{1}{2}$ , 7, or  $7\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. dividends. This Bill, I believe, in itself, is a very good Bill; but, on principle, I think it is only the duty of Members of this House to offer a protest against the action of the Associated Railway Companies generally throughout the country. It is not very long since the Great Northern Railway Company set at defiance a large class of season ticket holders, whom they are still keeping at arm's length. I hope the President of the Board of Trade will see to that matter when the question comes before him. I have no desire to divide the House upon this Bill, but I think it right, that I should lodge a protest against the measure on the grounds I have stated, and I hope the President of the Board of Trade will cause Railway Directors to realise that he is the master of the situation, and not they.

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a second time, and committed.

#### CITY AND SOUTH LONDON RAILWAY BILL (*by Order.*)

##### INSTRUCTION TO COMMITTEE.

MR. PICKERSGILL (Bethnal Green, S.W.) : I beg to move—

“That it be an Instruction to the Committee on the City and South London Railway Bill that they do insert a Clause reserving to the London County Council a power to purchase the undertaking, after the expiration of a limited period, on terms similar to those provided in Section 43 of ‘The Tramways Act, 1870.’”

In bringing forward the Instructions which stand in my name, I have acted not merely on my own initiative, although I entirely agree with them, but on behalf and at the request of the London County Council. I am aware that hon. Gentlemen will probably endeavour to raise a prejudice against the proposal upon that very ground, but I feel sure the House will

at least give a candid consideration to the proposals which emanate from the representatives of some four millions of people. What are the circumstances under which I bring forward these Instructions? There are now before the House a batch of London Electric Railway Bills, by which it is proposed to provide London with a series of underground railways traversing the Metropolis in various directions, and worked by electricity. And, Sir, all these projected lines are practically comprised within an area which is under the control of the London County Council. It is true a small portion of two of the lines penetrates the City of London, but I think that that consideration may be disregarded in view of the fact that the Government has, happily, committed itself to the principle of the unification of the Metropolis. Therefore the case stands thus: that the London County Council is the local authority for the area which will be traversed by these Companies, and I ask the House to affirm the principle that it is right that the London County Council, as the local authority, should be empowered to acquire these railway undertakings upon fair conditions after the expiration of a certain term of years. Now, Sir, it is only right and fair in two or three words that I should give the Parliamentary history of this question up to the present time. Several of these Bills were before the last Parliament, and then a Joint Committee of both Houses considered the whole question of Electric Railways for London. It is only fair that I should say that the London County Council presented before that Joint Committee the proposals which are embodied in my Instructions to-day. But, Sir, the Report of that Joint Committee made no reference to the question of purchase. The Report neither approved of purchase nor condemned purchase. It simply ignored purchase; therefore, so far as the Joint Committee is concerned, this question of purchase remained open. And now, Sir, comes the particular circumstance connected with the case with which I am dealing. In one very important respect these electric railway schemes differ from all other underground railways. What I mean is this: in other cases the companies have had to purchase the freehold of the land through

*Mr. Weir*

which the lines run, but in the case of these Electric Railway Companies it is proposed to give to the companies the right to acquire way-leaves under the surface, instead of acquiring the freehold. Even so, Sir, whenever these lines pass under private property they will be subject to the Lands Clauses Act in respect of compensation, and in order to avoid the payment of such compensation the routes of these railways have been so marked out as to follow the line of the public thoroughfares; in fact, the lines twist and turn about in order to follow the line of the public streets, and in this way, Sir, a very considerable advantage will accrue to the Railway Companies by acquiring the power to tunnel under the public streets. Now, what are the rights of the public in the public streets? In some cases the public has vested in it absolutely the freehold of the soil in the streets, and when that is not in point of law the case, still it has been decided that the public has very large indeterminate rights in the sub-soil of a street to any depth which it may be necessary to use for any public purpose. Now, Sir, if the means of locomotion can be successfully provided at a depth of 60 feet or more below the surface, then I say this constitutes a public use of the sub-soil of the streets, and the public ought not to be required to part with its rights in this regard without obtaining some compensation, or some equivalent. On this point I know I shall be told that the Joint Committee of both Houses suggested a certain compensation—namely, that the Company should be put upon terms to provide an adequate supply of cheap trains. I am perfectly aware of that, but what I want to point out is this: that this obligation to provide a cheap train service is an obligation which this House now imposes upon all new lines with a suburban traffic which run into London. It is no satisfaction, therefore, of the particular claim which I now put forward against these Electric Railway Companies, in consideration of the fact that they are to be allowed to tunnel under the public streets, a privilege whereby the cost of constructing their lines will be very materially diminished; and I think, therefore, that this is emphatically a case in which compensation can most properly be given by providing that

under certain conditions the community can acquire these undertakings. Sir, the principle of giving the right to the community or to the public to acquire railways is no new principle. I do not know whether it is necessary to remind the House that under the Act of 1844 the public has a right to acquire, under certain conditions, every railway in the country. Where a great trunk line is concerned of course the power of purchase cannot properly be given to any public authority short of the State itself. But here we are dealing not merely with local lines, but with what has been called, and I think very aptly, "municipal suburban tramways," limited to a certain area, and in this case I submit the local authority of the area properly represents the community. Now, Sir, I understand that, from a printed paper which has been issued by the promoters of the Bill, some objection will be taken to my Instruction upon the ground that it is in a mandatory form, and upon that issue I want to say just a word or two. All that I ask this House to affirm to-day is a principle, and I think it fairly falls within the province of this House to affirm a principle; whereas, upon the other hand, I leave the Committee to decide what I think properly falls within the province of a Committee—namely, to work out and to apply the principle. Sir, from the point of view of the promoters of these Bills the sting of this Instruction, if it has a sting, depends altogether upon the length of the term of years which is to be prescribed, at the end of which the right to purchase accrues; obviously so, for it is clear that you might fix a term of years so long that it is obvious no effect whatever could be produced upon the financial prospects of this company. For instance, if you fixed a term of 500 or 200 years, will anyone say that the financial position or financial prospects of these companies would be in any way affected? I think not, and therefore I say that the essence of the case depends upon the length of the term which you fix, and I am leaving it entirely to the Committee to determine what the length of the term should be. There is no desire in any part of this House, certainly not on my part or on the part of those with whom I am acting, to crush out legitimate commercial enterprise; but what we say is this: that the conditions of purchase must be adjusted,

and may be adjusted in such a way as not to interfere at all with the development of these electric railways. And in the consideration of this question I think that the story of electric lighting is not uninteresting. By the original Act the term of years during which undertakers of electric lighting might enjoy the profits of their enterprise was fixed at 21, and undoubtedly under that Act, and it may be in consequence of that Act, electric lighting enterprise was checked. Well, what happened? It was said that Parliament had killed commercial enterprise in electric lighting. But what was done when that cry was raised? Did Parliament reject, in respect of electric lighting, the principle of public purchase altogether? Not at all. Parliament took a very different course. Parliament re-considered the term during which the undertakers should enjoy the profits of their enterprise, and it extended that term from 21 years to 42 years, and under that Act electric lighting, which had received a check, has been stimulated and developed. That is instructive, and the moral is this: not to discard the principle of purchase by the community, but to be careful that in each case you fix a term of years which is suitable to the particular enterprise that is concerned. In this case we leave it to the Committee, after careful inquiry, to fix the term, and, therefore, I think any argument which can be drawn from the story of electric lighting tells rather in my favour than against me. As I know my friends on the other side will say that my proposals, if carried out, will kill these projects, I just desire in two words to point out the inconsistency of the promoters of these Bills. At one time the promoters draw the most glowing prospects and pictures of what can be done under these Bills. It was stated in the evidence produced before the Joint Committee that within seven years the number of passengers annually in London will be increased by no less a number than 400,000,000, if the means of getting about which these Bills offer are provided. In the case of one company—the Baker Street and Waterloo Company—it is estimated that it will carry 60,000,000 of passengers in the year, whereas the whole number of passengers carried by the District Railway over its whole system is only 36,000,000, and

one witness seems to anticipate that these railways will have the effect of killing the omnibus and cab services in London, much in the same way as it is said the electric railways of New York have largely reduced the similar services in that city.

MR. PROVAND (Glasgow, Blackfriars): They are overhead railways in New York.

MR. PICKERSGILL: That does not interfere with my argument. The statement is that the London cab service and the London omnibus service will be largely reduced by these railways. Then, finally, it is estimated by the proper authorities that the cost of construction of these railways will be only one-third of the cost of constructing the Metropolitan Railway; and it is further said that, having regard to the greater speed at which these trains will run, and the more frequent services, the expenses of management will be very much less than on the railways which now exist. I admire the enthusiasm of Mr. Greathead, the engineer, and other witnesses, and I think I am entitled to point out the inconsistency of the promoters, who in one breath extol the enormous economical advantages which these railways will possess over the underground railways which are at present in existence, and yet, in the same breath, tell us, "You will kill these projects if you fix any term in which the right of compulsory purchase may accrue." I think I am justified in pointing out that the promoters of these railways are blowing hot and cold at once in this matter. I have dealt with the particular objections which I understand are raised in this particular case, and it only remains that in one word I should sum up the broad grounds upon which I rest the Instruction which I desire to move to-day, and these grounds are these: that the public has a right to acquire upon reasonable conditions all the lines which are essential to the life of a great city, and which partake of the nature of monopolies, whether they are concerned with water, or with gas, or with locomotion. That is the simple proposition which I ask this House to affirm; all the rest I leave to the decision of the Committee, after taking evidence upon the question. I beg, Sir, to move the first Instruction which stands in my name.

Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That it be an Instruction to the Committee on the City and South London Railway Bill that they do insert a Clause reserving to the London County Council a power to purchase the undertaking, after the expiration of a limited period, on terms similar to those provided in Section 43 of 'The Tramways Act, 1870'"—  
(*Mr. Pickersgill*).

\*MR. BOULNOIS (Marylebone, E.) :

As a member of the London County Council, and of that section of it which has some regard for the interests of the London ratepayers, I desire to say a word on the Motion of the hon. Member for Bethnal Green. He claims to speak on behalf of the London County Council in this matter. I should like to explain how that body deals with these questions, for I declare deliberately that they do not receive adequate consideration. There is no real discussion upon them; they are brought forward in the Reports of Committees, which are circulated by the last post on Saturday evenings, or by the early post on Monday mornings, and on Tuesday the Council is called upon to discuss them. Perhaps a quarter of an hour or 20 minutes is expended upon them, when some impetuous member, not caring to hear arguments which are against his views, moves the closure, which, easily as it appears to be exercised in this House, is still more freely used in the London County Council. When, therefore, the hon. Member for Bethnal Green tells us that this is the deliberate opinion of the Council, I say it is not so; and in so saying I speak in the interests of the London ratepayers. We all know that the London County Council, if it could, would get hold of the railways, and would pay wages much higher than the market rates, with the result that passengers would be carried at non-remunerative rates at the expense of the ratepayers. But they would not stop there. They recently gave notice of their intention to acquire a small section of tramways within the Metropolitan area. There was a good deal of glib talk by members as to the profits to be made; estimates were paraded, and then, when the company sent in its claim, it was found to be seven times as much as the Council's engineer had estimated the value of the undertaking at. The question has not been

settled yet; it is still before the arbitrator, and I only quote it as showing how fallacious are the arguments of the Radical members of the London County Council. I venture to assert that if you carry such an Instruction as this it will operate in absolute restraint of all private enterprise. And when we consider what private enterprise has done, I think the House should pause before it fetters the proposed railway in this manner. I do not think it is at all necessary that a Municipality like the London County Council should thus step in between those who use the railways and those who own them. Locomotion in London is exceedingly cheap, and I am not aware that the public have given any mandate to the London County Council to acquire these undertakings. I question very much the proposition put forward to-day that the people of London have a right to the subsoil of the streets. I venture to think it belongs to the freeholder, but still that is a point which is open to argument, and which has not yet been settled. I am not prepared to affirm that the companies should pay nothing for the privileges which they undoubtedly enjoy. I think they might well pay something in the shape of rent or royalty; but I would remind the House that at Huddersfield—the only Municipality which has acquired and worked a tramway—the experiment has turned out a failure. I believe that the London County Council will not stop at the proposition now put forward by the hon. Member for Bethnal Green; but that they will go on and seek to acquire not merely electric but all other railways, as well as tramways, omnibuses, and steamboats and docks. Therefore, I appeal to this House to restrain this octopus, with its greedy, grasping antennæ, and prevent its acquiring these railways, which, in my humble judgment, are best left in the hands of private enterprise, and placed under State control.

MR. STANSFELD (Halifax) : The House will have noticed that the Instruction put forward by my hon. Friend is mandatory, and directs the Committee, before which this Bill will go, to pursue a certain course. So far as I know, the Instruction is in Order; but at the same time it is most unusual, and ought to be very strongly justified. The hon. Mem-

ber has asked this House to infer that the Joint Committee which sat on these Bills last year were in favour of this proposal. I rather think they came to the conclusion that it was not their duty to advise or direct future Committees. The Committee was, in fact, appointed to make suggestions for the general guidance of Committees, so far as they might be willing to accept them, on Bills of this character with the object of securing something like an approach to uniformity. I am not at all prepared to say what the opinions of individual Members of that Committee were. I think it is highly probable some were entirely opposed to the views of the hon. Member, but I may make this statement without fear of contradiction—namely, that we were all united in an unanimous conclusion against inserting any clause in the Report on this question on the ground that we could not undertake the responsibility of over-weighting the Bills and possibly preventing the initiation of works in the public interest.

MR. WHITMORE (Chelsea): As a Member of the Joint Committee, perhaps I may be allowed to remind the House that the reason why the Committee did not insert a specific paragraph in their Report condemnatory of proposals of this nature was that the evidence put forward on behalf of the London County Council was so unconsidered that it was really not before us in such a form as would enable us to come to a definite conclusion. I appeal to hon. Members who were Members of that Committee whether the evidence, such as it was, did not convince us that any such proposition as this would be absolutely fatal to the carrying out of any new railway enterprise. The evidence was overwhelming that no single one of these railway undertakings would be able to obtain the requisite capital if it were hampered by any such restrictions as these. Even if the proposal had any weight, surely the proper way to proceed would be not in this piecemeal and accidental manner, but by a general Public Act, which would have every opportunity of being considered by this House. I do ask hon. Members, in the interest of new railway undertakings, not to disregard the evidence laid before the Joint Committee of last year, but to reject a proposal which would, in my judgment, be

absolutely fatal to the most necessary railway projects.

\*MR. JOHN BURNS (Battersea): I do not on the present occasion speak as a member of the London County Council, but I venture as a plain citizen of London to give a few mechanical and industrial reasons why the Second Reading of this Bill should take place this day six months. The other night we discussed in this House the question of railway rates, and I refer to that subject for this reason—namely, that many on both sides of the House, traders and others, thought that our predecessors made a great mistake in not originally exercising the powers given them under a certain Act for the nationalisation of railways. I regret with many men that in 1864-5, when these powers were conferred, steps were not taken in the interest of the trade and commerce of this country to secure the nationalisation of the railways at the end of a given period, and no doubt those who may succeed us 10 years hence will curse our memories for having done nothing at this time in the same direction. My objections to this Bill are twofold. The first is a mechanical one. We find that the tunnels in this railway are to be 11 ft. 6 in. in diameter.

\*MR. SPEAKER: Order, order! We are not now discussing the Bill; but the question before the House is the proposed Instruction to the Committee, and the hon. Member must confine himself solely to the terms of that Instruction.

MR. JOHN BURNS: As a matter of Order, Sir, is it not possible for me to advert to faults in the proposed undertaking?

\*MR. SPEAKER: The Bill has been read a second time. Its principle has been affirmed, and it is only open now to the hon. Member to discuss the Instruction.

MR. JOHN BURNS: I only wanted to give reasons why some uniformity should be secured in the making of these railways. Here, as I say, the tunnel is to be 11 ft. 6 in. in diameter. On another railway the tunnels are 12 ft. in diameter, and on other railways the measurements vary. I want to point out that unless we have uniformity in the building of these tunnels, when the day comes for securing and amalgamating all the railways in the metropolitan district, we

shall find that lack of uniformity practically fatal to the scheme.

\*MR. SPEAKER: Order, Order! The hon. Member is discussing the Bill, and not the Instruction.

MR. JOHN BURNS: Very well, Sir; I will drop that point. All I will add is that it seems to me that hon. Members wish to deny to London powers which they are prepared to give to other large cities and towns. I believe that if Birmingham, Glasgow, or Manchester were to apply for powers such as these, the House would agree that the request was perfectly reasonable, and would concede it at once. I hold that London should not be denied powers which other Municipalities enjoy. We have no desire to restrict private enterprise provided it is consistent with the homogeneous government of London from a physical point of view. I ask this House to reject this Bill, and, if possible, to prevent any such Bills coming before it until uniformity of system has been secured.

\*SIR JOHN LUBBOCK (London University): I hardly think the House would be disposed to refuse to London what Glasgow, Manchester, or Birmingham already possess, but that is not now the question before us. The hon. Member for Marylebone scarcely did justice to the discussions which took place in the London County Council. In the first place, the Reports of Committees are sent out on Saturdays, and I believe that ample time is given both for their consideration and for the discussion of them. The hon. Member for Bethnal Green, who moved this Resolution, has told the House that he speaks for the London County Council in this matter. I should like to ask him, but, speaking from memory, I do not think the London County Council have passed any resolution at all upon this question during the present year. Of course, if he tells me that they have done so, I shall accept the assurance. I do not, however, understand that he is prepared to do so. No doubt it is perfectly true, and he is entitled to say so, that we were of opinion a year ago that some such powers as these ought to be introduced in Bills of this character. But since that time there has been sitting a Committee of this House which went into the matter carefully, and the

Chairman of which has certainly given very strong reasons against a Resolution such as this. I do not think that the London County Council have re-considered the matter since that Joint Committee sat and with that information before them, and, therefore, though they were, a year or so ago, in favour of such powers as are indicated in the Instruction, I do not think they have decided that they would wish to throw out the Bill. There is a great deal to be said for giving Local Authorities power to acquire railways, but I think, in view of the strong statements made, that the effect of this Resolution would be to discourage private enterprise, that it would in the interests of London be better to allow the Bill to go upstairs and be examined by a Select Committee unfettered by any such Instruction as that now proposed.

\*THE CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES (MR. MELLOR, York, W.R., Sowerby): I am afraid that I also must oppose this proposition. It is a serious matter; even more serious, I think, than is supposed by many who have spoken against it, for it is an attempt to engraft a new principle upon private legislation. While I express no opinion as to the propriety of the purchase of railways by the State or by Local Authorities, I must say that if that is to be done it ought to be done by a Public Bill, and the ordinary procedure followed so that everyone interested may have full notice of the proposed change. I should like to add—and I do not say it at all offensively—that the present proceeding is a mode of evading the Standing Orders of the House; and, if it were assented to, it would be possible to engraft upon some small, and perhaps insignificant, Bill a great public change, which the House might wish to take some time to consider. A mandatory Instruction ought to be very carefully scanned before being adopted, because under it the hands of the Committee are tied, and the valuable jurisdiction they possess is practically nullified on matters of very considerable importance. Under these circumstances, I must oppose the Instruction.



MR. A. J. BALFOUR (Manchester, E.): The House, no doubt, is obliged to the right hon. Gentleman the Chairman of Ways and Means for the very able guidance he has given us in dealing with this important matter. He has shown conclusively that whatever may be the merits or demerits of the abstract proposals the hon. Member for Bethnal Green has laid before us, at all events we are asked to consider them in a shape which makes it absolutely impossible for us to come to a proper decision on them. He has shown that if we are to deal with these matters at all we should deal with them in a Public Bill, on which every proper opportunity should be given to Members to express an opinion upon them. For my own part, even apart from that which is more an objection of form, I have the strongest objection in point of substance to the proposals made. It appears to me there are two objections, each of which is conclusive. The first is, that the acceptance of such proposals would absolutely kill the investment of capital in the Metropolis, and would render it wholly absurd for capitalists to come forward and start projects of this sort, knowing that when they had started them the persons who would reap the fruit of them would be a Body which had had nothing whatever to do with their original inception. Secondly, apart from that, I look with the gravest apprehension upon any scheme for enormously increasing the position of Municipal Bodies as direct employers of labour. We have seen in this House how much the ordinary course of Business is hampered by the fact that the country is itself a great employer of labour. Night after night is taken up by discussions arising out of that fundamental fact. We cannot expect that our great Municipalities, least of all the great County Council of London, will carry on the duty that Parliament has entrusted to them satisfactorily if it is augmented by all the responsibilities that must attach under proposals of this nature.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE (Mr. MUNDELLA, Sheffield, Brightside): I would appeal to my hon. Friend to withdraw the Motion. Not only is it important that these enterprises should go forward, but, as a matter of fact, this undertaking will go beyond the jurisdiction of the London County

Council. I have made inquiries and I find that the County Council have taken no action in this matter, and have made no communication to the Board of Trade. This Bill is not on all fours with tramway enterprises which are purely of a local character, and which it is frequently desirable to place under one authority, so that a variety of lines may be consolidated into one system. I hope the hon. Member will withdraw his Motion.

MR. W. HUNTER (Aberdeen, N.): I would point out that the observations of the right hon. Gentleman, the late Leader of the House (Mr. A. J. Balfour), afford conclusive proof that this is a question which ought to be decided by the House and not by a Committee upstairs. What are the arguments of the right hon. Gentleman? First, that this proposal would prevent the investment of capital. That is a great argument, and one not applicable only to this Bill, but to all Bills of a similar kind. His second objection is, that it is not desirable to increase the powers of the County Councils in the employment of working men. That is also a general question. The proper questions for a Committee upstairs are those which arise upon the particular facts of a particular Bill. This Instruction, however, raises a general question of policy, which it is not proper to refer to a Committee upstairs. It is a question with which hon. Members may differ in opinion, and, therefore, ought to be considered by the House.

LORD RANDOLPH CHURCHILL (Paddington, S.): I desire to put a question to the hon. Member who is responsible for this Motion. Did I understand him to say that he has the authority of the London County Council for moving this Instruction.

MR. PICKERSGILL: Certainly.

LORD R. CHURCHILL: Will the hon. Member kindly explain how that authority was given, and when?

MR. PICKERSGILL: The London County Council has presented Petitions against the Bill, and in each of those Petitions it has asked that clauses on the line indicated by my Instruction should be inserted.

LORD R. CHURCHILL: Have those Petitions been subjects of consideration by the present London County Council?

**MR. PICKERSGILL** : Certainly ; by the Parliamentary Committee, to whom authority is delegated by the London County Council. I suppose the noble Lord understands what delegated authority is.

Question put.

The House divided :—Ayes 129 ; Noes 242.—(Division List, No. 24.)

## QUESTIONS.

### THE OFFICE OF JUDGE ADVOCATE GENERAL.

**SIR G. OSBORNE MORGAN** (Denbighshire, E.) : I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether the vacancy in the office of Judge Advocate General has been or will be filled up, or what arrangement has been made for the discharge of the duties attached to that office ; and in what way it is proposed in such arrangement to deal with the immemorial right of the officers and soldiers of Her Majesty's Forces to have the findings and sentences of Courts Martial submitted to the Judge Advocate General personally for examination and revision ?

\***THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR** (**MR. CAMPBELL - BANNERMAN**, Stirling, &c.) : A Judge of the High Court of Justice, the Right Hon. Sir F. Jeune, has been appointed Judge Advocate General, without salary. This appointment is in accordance with the recommendation of the Select Committee of 1888 on Army Estimates. As a matter of fact, only very important cases have in the ordinary course been brought before the Judge Advocate General personally, the others being dealt with by the Deputy Judge Advocate General ; and those cases will still be dealt with by that officer.

### THE GARVE AND ULLAPOOL RAILWAY

**MR. WEIR** (Ross and Cromarty) : I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he is aware that a railway from Garve to Ullapool is already authorised by "The Garve and Ullapool Railway Act, 1890" ; whether, having regard to the serious distress prevalent in the western districts of Ross and

Cromarty and the Island of Lewis, the Treasury are now prepared to sanction an arrangement under which that railway may be constructed with the aid of a Government guarantee ; whether a similar arrangement will be sanctioned for the proposed railway from Achnasheen to Aultbea ; whether he is aware of the contention of the Garve and Ullapool Railway Company that they were led by the Treasury to expect that an arrangement in the nature of a Government subsidy or guarantee would be made provided a solvent Railway Company would agree to construct and work the line ; and that an arrangement to this effect was then made by them with the Great North of Scotland Railway Company, and why the Treasury thereupon withdrew from the pending negotiations ; and whether the Treasury are now prepared to accept the offer made by the Garve and Ullapool and Great North of Scotland Railway Companies as to the construction of the railway authorised by "The Garve and Ullapool Railway Act, 1890," with the aid of a Government guarantee ; and, if not, why not ?

**THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER** (**SIR W. HARCOURT**, Derby) : The Highlands and Islands Commission, in July, 1890, reported against this line in the following terms :—

"The Ullapool line cannot, as at present designed, be recommended as one accommodating fishing requirements. Ullapool is situated some miles from the sea; entailing too long a beat inwards or outwards for fishing craft."

The Special Committee of 1891, appointed to inquire into the various railway schemes in the West Highlands, reported as follows :—

"For this reason, we concur in the opinion of the Highlands and Islands Commission, that Ullapool is unfitted for a fishery centre."

There appears to be no ground for the contention in the fourth paragraph of the question. The determination of the late Government not to contribute to this line was communicated to its promoters by the Scotch Office on the 16th December, 1891, and repeated by the Treasury in June, 1892 ; and the present Government see no reason for reversing that decision. They are not prepared to guarantee the Achnasheen and Aultbea line.

### ESCAPED CONVICTS FROM NEW CALEDONIA.

Mr. HOGAN (Tipperary, Mid.): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether he has observed in *The Melbourne Age* of 31st January a telegram from Sir George Dibbs, Premier of New South Wales, declaring that there were at that time in New South Wales 700 ex-convicts from New Caledonia not liable to extradition, and that 11 convicts had escaped from New Caledonia to some part of the Australian coast during the past three months; whether he is aware that in the adjoining colonies of Victoria and Queensland there is also a considerable number of escaped convicts from New Caledonia, that serious offences have been committed by such persons in Australia, and that they have had to be re-imprisoned at the expense of British colonists; whether he will remonstrate with a view to prompt correction of this evil; and whether, in view of the fact that New Caledonia is situated in Australian waters, and only came into the possession of France under accidental circumstances, he is prepared to suggest transference of the island to British control under terms and conditions to be mutually agreed upon?

\*THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Sir E. GREY, Northumberland, Berwick): No official information of the statement attributed to Sir George Dibbs has been received by Her Majesty's Government, but there are grounds for believing that the facts are, generally speaking, as described by the hon. Member. Various representations have been made to the French Government from time to time, and the subject will not be lost sight of, but Her Majesty's Government are not prepared to make such a proposal as is suggested at the end of the question.

### THE CROFTERS' COMMISSIONERS.

Mr. MACFARLANE (Argyll): I desire to ask the Secretary for Scotland if he can state when it is expected that the Crofters' Commissioners will visit the district of Appin, in Argyllshire, for the purpose of fixing fair rents, application for which was made in April, 1887?

THE SECRETARY FOR SCOTLAND (Sir G. TREVELYAN, Glasgow, Bridgeton): It is anticipated that the Commissioners will visit the district of Appin in the course of this Spring or early summer.

### CHRISTIAN BROTHERS' SCHOOLS IN IRELAND.

Mr. WILLIAM REDMOND (Clare, E.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he will consult the Commissioners of National Education in Ireland, with a view to having some arrangement come to by which the Christian Brothers' schools in Ireland may be able to participate in the grant for education in Ireland?

\*THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. J. MORLEY, Newcastle-upon-Tyne): At present the Government have no intention to initiate action in the direction indicated by the hon. Member in his question.

### JUDICIAL RENTS IN NORTH CLARE.

Mr. WILLIAM REDMOND: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland when a Sub-Commission will sit to fix rents in North Clare; and whether he is aware that there is dissatisfaction in this district owing to the fact that a number of cases, in which the originating notices were fixed over two years ago, have not yet been heard?

\*Mr. J. MORLEY: The Land Commissioners report that a Sub-Commission will sit on an early day to hear cases arising in County Clare—probably in two months. There are 57 outstanding cases altogether in the county in which the originating notices were served so far back as two years ago. All these cases have been listed for hearing, but have been adjourned in some cases on the application of the parties themselves.

Mr. W. REDMOND: I would ask the right hon. Gentleman whether he could not induce the Land Commission to appoint a Sub-Commission to fix rents in County Clare within the next two months?

Mr. J. MORLEY: I will bring the matter under their notice.

Mr. W. REDMOND: There is much dissatisfaction on this matter in County Clare.

## THE MAGAZINE RIFLE.

**MR. HENNIKER HEATON** (Canterbury) : I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War what kind of magazine rifle the British Army is now being supplied with, and the cost for each weapon ; whether competition was invited for the best magazine rifle before the pattern was decided upon ; whether he has ever directed trials to be made of the Mauser and Mannlicher rifles, in comparison with the rifle now being supplied to the British Army ; whether a weapon in every essential respect identical with that intended for the British troops has been tried and rejected by the Military Authorities of the chief European and American States ; whether, as a single-loader, the rifle now being supplied to Her Majesty's soldiers is inferior to the old Martini-Henry ; for how long will the British soldier be able to fire at magazine speed, as compared with the time a German soldier armed with the Mauser rifle can so fire ; and whether the cost of producing the new rifle, including wear and tear and depreciation of machinery, interest on cost of plant, &c., is greater than the cost of the Mauser or Mannlicher ?

**\*MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN :**

The Army is being supplied with the Lee-Metford magazine rifle. The cost, as made in the Small Arms Factory, is about £3 15s., but those obtained from the trade cost more. Before the Lee-Metford was adopted many rifles of the best-known systems were examined and tried by the Committee of Investigation ; among others the Mauser and Mannlicher. We have no evidence to show to what trials foreign States have subjected the Lee-Metford or a rifle resembling it. As a single-loader the Lee-Metford is not inferior to the Martini-Henry. The magazine of the Mauser rifle holds five cartridges ; that of the Lee-Metford, as now being made, holds 10. Presumably, therefore, the British soldier should maintain magazine speed for the longest time. The cost of the Lee-Metford rifle exceeds that paid under certain contracts made in the countries using them for the Mannlicher and Mauser rifles ; but the difference would be to a large extent accounted for by the higher wages paid in this country.

**MAJOR RASCH :** May I ask if the report is correct, which states that the life and endurance of the Lee-Metford rifle is limited to 3,300 rounds ?

**MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN :** I cannot say.

**IRISH NATIONAL SCHOOL TEACHERS.**

**MR. JOHNSTON** (Belfast, S.) : I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether the provision in the National Education Act, passed in last Parliament, that all National school teachers should receive 20 per cent. addition to their class salaries, applies to work-mistresses in the National schools ; and whether the National Education Commissioners allow this percentage to work-mistresses ?

**MR. J. MORLEY :** The Irish Education Act provides an increase of 20 per cent. to the existing rates of class salaries of teachers and of salaries of assistant teachers of National schools, but makes no provision for any increase to the salaries of work-mistresses in such schools. Work-mistresses are not in receipt of class salaries, and are not recognised as classed teachers or assistants. The Commissioners have no warrant to allow the percentage to work-mistresses.

**MR. JOHNSTON :** Will the right hon. Gentleman look into the question, and see if anything can be done ?

**MR. J. MORLEY :** Yes, Sir.

**IMPERIAL GRANTS TO BELFAST UNION**

**MR. JOHNSTON :** I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that, during the year ending 31st December, 1892, the Parliamentary grant from the Imperial Exchequer, for various purposes, to the Belfast Union amounted to £14,230 ; and whether, in view of the proposed changes in the relations between the Imperial Government and the Belfast Union, he can state, if these grants be withdrawn, what the increase to the poor rate will be in the Union ?

**\*MR. J. MORLEY :** The first paragraph correctly states the fact. The total amount named—namely, £14,230, will represent a poundage rate of 3½d. on the Union valuation unless the Irish Government of the day should continue the payments.

## DUTY-PAID SPIRITS.

**MR. ARTHUR O'CONNOR** (Donegal, E.) : I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will state the nature of the change introduced in 1888-9 in the system of accounting for the removals from Customs warehouses of duty-paid spirits between England, Scotland, and Ireland ?

**SIR W. HARCOURT** : The Board of Customs are not aware that any change was introduced in 1888-89, in the system of accounting for removals from Customs warehouses of duty-paid spirits between England, Scotland, and Ireland. Before the 5th July, 1890, no record of such removals was kept ; but from that date a system of recording such removals has been introduced.

**MR. A. O'CONNOR** : May I ask whether the right hon. Gentleman is aware that a change introduced, or by whatever epithet it may be described, has resulted in a loss to the credit of Ireland of no less than £360,000 a year in the appropriation between the three Kingdoms.

**SIR W. HARCOURT** : I must ask the hon. Member to put the question on the Paper.

**MR. A. O'CONNOR** : May I ask whether, before the Government of Ireland Bill goes into Committee, he will afford the Irish Members an opportunity of understanding and appreciating the system which has been adopted and is now in operation.

**SIR W. HARCOURT** : The hon. Member perfectly well knows he can obtain the information he desires by putting a question on the subject upon the Paper. I must ask him not to put these questions *otthand*.

## BARGES IN THE THAMES ESTUARY.

**MAJOR RASCH** (Essex, S.E.) : I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade if he can state how many barges of all kinds have been run down in the estuary of the Thames during the five years previous to June, 1892 ?

**THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE** (Mr. MUNDELLA, Sheffield, Brightside) : I am having the particulars got out from the Returns in the Wreck Department, and will furnish the hon. Member with the result.

## OVERCROWDING ON THE ELECTRIC RAILWAY.

**MR. A. C. MORTON** (Peterborough) : I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether his attention has been called to the overcrowding of the trains on the City and South London Electric Railway at certain times of the day, which is said to be illegal, and is dangerous to human life ; and whether he will take steps, by legislation or otherwise, to prevent overcrowding of trains ?

**MR. MUNDELLA** : The Board of Trade have from time to time received complaints of overcrowding on this railway, and have communicated with the company. The company state that they are using every effort to meet the press of traffic which occurs for about an hour every morning and evening. To enable them to do this, additional sidings are being constructed, and an application is now before Parliament for power to construct a duplicate line from the Borough to the City.

**MR. MORTON** : May I ask why, if omnibus and tramway proprietors are prosecuted for overcrowding, even for carrying one person above the prescribed number, Railway Companies are not proceeded against in a similar way ?

**MR. MUNDELLA** : I am unable to answer that question.

## THE NORDENFELDT GUNS.

**MR. ROBERT WALLACE** (Edinburgh, E.) : I beg to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty if he can state how many Nordenfeldt guns have burst during operations connected with the Navy since the introduction of the weapon into the Service ; and whether any, and how many, persons have been killed or wounded in such accidents ?

**THE SECRETARY TO THE ADMIRALTY** (Sir U. KAY-SHUTTLEWORTH, Lancashire, Clitheroe) : None of the six-pounder Nordenfeldt guns have burst on service. But of the Nordenfeldt machine guns, from 1879 to the present time, two have blown off their muzzles, without injury to anyone. Twenty-two other accidents, principally due to hang-fire, have occurred, resulting in injuries to 15 persons. In 1879 one accident occurred, due to bad manipulation, and resulted in the death of one man and the injury of one other. No more Nordenfeldt

machine guns are being made; the Maxim guns are the only machine guns now ordered.

#### SCOTCH RAILWAY RATES.

**MR. ALEXANDER CROSS** (Glasgow, Camlachie): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he is aware that the Scotch Railway Companies are not in the habit of exhibiting tables showing mileages at their stations, so that, in consequence, traders are unable to know what rates they are charged; and that, when applied to, these Railway Companies in many instances state they are not aware of the mileage, and can only quote their rate of carriage; and whether he will order inquiry into the matter and endeavour to arrange for mileage tables, clearly stated, being put up at all stations?

**MR. MUNDELLA**: Section 14 of the "Regulation of Railways Act, 1873," provides, under a penalty, that every Railway Company shall keep at each of their stations a book or books, showing not only every rate charged, but also the distance from that station to every place to which the company book. The book in question is required to be, during all reasonable hours, open to the inspection of any person without the payment of any fee.

**MR. A. CROSS**: Upon whom devolves the duty of laying information and bringing actions to recover penalties when the regulations are not complied with?

**MR. MUNDELLA**: Anyone can prosecute to recover a penalty.

**MR. TOMLINSON** (Preston): Have the Board of Trade any information as to whether, in the new rate books, the distances are uniformly or generally set forth by the companies?

**MR. MUNDELLA**: I must ask for notice of that. It deals with another question altogether.

#### PARISH RELIEF IN SCOTLAND.

**\*MR. WEIR**: I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland if he can state why five paupers—namely, Widow Stewart, over 70 years of age; Widow Mackintosh, over 80 years of age; Widow M. Cameron, nearly 80 years; Widow Mackenzie Corriemoilie and Alexander Grant, said to be 97 years of age, resident at Garve or neighbourhood,

have to pay a person to go to Contin, a distance of six miles, to receive their parish allowance, a duty which should be performed by the Inspector of Poor for the parishes of Urray and Killornan, an Assistant Inspector, or other competent person appointed by the Parochial Board as provided by statute; and whether steps will be taken to remove this grievance?

**SIR G. TREVELYAN**: The hon. Member's question was at once referred to the Board of Supervision. They telegraphed to their local Inspector to make inquiries, but his reply has not yet been received.

#### MOONLIGHTING IN CLARE.

**COLONEL SAUNDERSON** (Armagh, N.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland how many cases of moonlighting there were between 20th August, 1891, and 28th February, 1892, in County Clare, and whether he will give descriptions of each; and how many non-agrarian cases of moonlighting there were for Clare, for Kerry, for Cork, and for Limerick during the periods from 20th August, 1892, to 28th February, 1893, and from 20th August, 1891, and 28th February, 1892?

**\*MR. J. MORLEY**: There were nine cases of moonlighting, agrarian and non-agrarian, in County Clare between August 20, 1891, and February 28, 1892, classified as follows: Firing at the person, 1; firing into dwelling, 4; intimidation, 3; robbery of arms, 1—total, 9. The following statement gives the number of non-agrarian cases of moonlighting in Clare, Kerry, Cork, and Limerick, during the periods mentioned: From August 20, 1892, to February 28, 1893, Clare, 10; Kerry, 3; Cork, 6; Limerick, 5. August 20, 1891, to February 28, 1892: Clare, 3; Kerry, 4; Cork, 1; Limerick, Nil. This increase in moonlighting to which I have referred has manifested itself not throughout these counties in their general areas, but rather in particular localities.

**MR. W. REDMOND** (Clare, W.): Can the right hon. Gentleman give the House the number of evictions and seizures for rent in County Clare in the same period.

**MR. J. MORLEY**: I have not the numbers here.

### THE POLICE AND THE HOME RULE BILL.

**MR. THOMAS HEALY** (Wexford, N.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that, within the past week, an ex-policeman, named Forsythe, and a man, named Tuohy, entered the Police Barracks at Murrintown, in the County of Wexford, for the purpose of obtaining the signatures of the police to a Petition against the Home Rule Bill; and whether steps will be taken to prevent servants of the Crown being subjected to visits and canvassing of this nature?

**\*MR. J. MORLEY:** I am informed that the police at Murrintown were not asked to sign, nor did they sign, any Petition against the Bill. The two individuals referred to were looking for signatures to the Petition in the vicinity of the barrack, and this apparently has given rise to the unfounded report so far as the police are concerned.

### EXTRA POLICE FOR WEXFORD.

**MR. THOMAS HEALY:** I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland if it is the case that at the coming Wexford Assizes a Presentment for the sum of £391 for extra police for the half-year ending 30th September, 1892, is to be applied for; whether the ordinary number of police have been found insufficient to deal with the exceptionally small amount of crime in Wexford County; who is responsible for bringing the extra police into the county, and for what purpose were they required; and whether the Magistrates of the county were in any way consulted on the matter?

**MR. J. MORLEY:** The Inspector General informs me that the statement in the first paragraph is according to the fact. The ordinary free quota of police was not sufficient to perform all the police duty of the county, and in August, 1889, the Magistrates of the county, at a meeting duly convened for the purpose, certified that the free quota was not sufficient, and that a further force of 25 men was necessary in order to ensure the peace of the county, for which purpose these men were appointed, and they still remain in the county.

**MR. THOMAS HEALY:** I wish to ask the right hon. Gentleman is he aware

that the criminal business, both at the Spring and Summer Assizes, is generally over in about half an hour?

**MR. J. MORLEY:** I cannot say.

### ABSENTEE MAGISTRATES.

**MR. WEIR:** I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland whether Her Majesty's Government will take the necessary steps to remove from the Roll of Justices of the Peace for Ross and Cromarty all persons who are not actual in-dwellers in the same shire, as required by the Scotch Act, 1587, c. 82.

**THE LORD ADVOCATE** (Mr. J. B. BALFOUR, Clackmannan): It is not, according to the existing law, essential to the name of a person continuing upon the Commission of the Peace that he shall be actually resident in the county, though care should always be taken to have an adequate number of Resident Justices to meet the public requirements. Her Majesty's Government, therefore, do not propose to take steps in the direction indicated in the question.

**DR. CLARK** (Caithness): May I ask if a man may remain on the Roll when he no longer possesses a property or residential qualification?

**\*MR. J. B. BALFOUR:** This matter was under the consideration of the Lord Chancellor 10 or 12 years ago, and he expressed an opinion that the actual cessation of residence did not necessarily involve the removal of the name from the Commission.

**MR. WEIR:** Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that in this particular county there are 33 Justices on the Commission who are non-resident. Some are resident in India and other parts of the world?

**MR. J. B. BALFOUR:** I cannot say.

### LIMERICK ASSIZES.

**MR. WILLIAM KENNY** (Dublin, St. Stephen's Green): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether his attention has been called to the observations of Mr. Justice Gibson at the opening of the Limerick Assizes on Thursday last, to the effect that there was an increase of specially reported crimes as compared with last year, the numbers being 81 as against 54; that he regarded them as showing a certain amount of hardy lawlessness in the community, while an utter disregard on the part of the victims to come for-

ward and give evidence was displayed ; and whether, in view of this statement by the Judge of Assize, and the hope expressed by Mr. Justice O'Brien at the Clare Assizes, that means would be found to remove the administration of the Criminal Law entirely out of the County of Clare, he will consider the advisability of again putting in force in those two counties those clauses of "The Criminal Law Amendment (Ireland) Act, 1887," which provide for special juries and change of venue ?

**MR. TUTE** (Westmeath, N.) : Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that the criminal records for these Assizes have for years past been practically blank, and that one of the Judges who go this circuit has stated that he does not know what to do with all the white gloves presented to him ?

\***MR. J. MORLEY** : My attention has been drawn to the language of the learned Judge. No Assizes will be held for Clare or Limerick until the Summer Assizes, and meantime the Crown will consider what course is proper to pursue. I may add that the number of the reported outrages was in 1888, 103 ; in 1889, 85 ; in 1890, 97 ; in 1891, 78 ; and in 1892, 84 ; and, therefore, though the figures fluctuate, there is nothing alarming about the fluctuations. Of course, it is not a satisfactory state of things.

**MR. W. REDMOND** : I beg to give notice that if any attempt is made to apply any of the provisions of the Criminal Law Amendment (Ireland) Act to County Clare, I shall strongly oppose it.

**MR. J. MORLEY** : I did not say there was any such intention.

#### SHEFFIELD POOR LAW DISTRICTS.

**COLONEL HOWARD VINCENT** (Sheffield, Central) : I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board if he will state on what ground and by whose recommendation an Order is to be issued breaking up the ancient township of Sheffield into arbitrarily divided wards for the election of the Guardians of the Poor, without public local inquiry and in defiance of the representations of seven out of eleven of the present Guardians elected by the township, and of an urgent Petition signed by nearly 600 ratepayers ; and having in view the strong local feeling on the sub-

ject, if he will withhold or suspend his approval until an official of the Local Government Board has fully investigated the whole of the facts upon oral evidence, and made report to himself ?

**THE PRESIDENT OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD** (Mr. H. H. FOWLER, Wolverhampton, E.) : The township of Sheffield has a population of more than 90,000, and it was in consequence of an application by the Guardians of the Sheffield Union of which the township forms a part, that it was proposed by the Local Government Board to divide the township into wards for the election of Guardians. The proposed wards, it was understood, were to be the same as those which have been constituted for municipal elections. The Board have since received representations adverse to the proposal, and I have directed that a local inquiry shall be held before a final decision is arrived at.

#### EDINBURGH COMMISSARY OFFICE.

**MR. PAUL** (Edinburgh, S.) : I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland whether he has received a Memorial from the staff of the Commissary Office in Edinburgh, asking that they may be admitted to rank as Civil servants in respect of pay and other advantages ; and whether, in view of the fact that the work done at this office is as important and efficient as the similar work of the Dublin Probate Office, that the salaries are nearly 50 per cent. lower, and that the hours of the staff, which consists of only eight persons, have recently been raised from six to seven a day, he can give a favourable answer to the prayer of the memorialists ?

**SIR G. TREVELYAN** : I have received the Memorial to which the hon. Member alludes. In 1890 the Treasury laid down the principle that in offices of a semi-legal character, like that of the Commissary for Scotland, it was inexpedient to entertain a staff of clerks on the Civil Service Establishment. I think it not advisable to press the Treasury now to re-consider this line of policy which they have clearly laid down.

#### POOR LAW PRACTICE.

**MR. BARTLEY** (Islington, N.) : I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board whether he is aware that in reports of young persons (especially girls) who have been started



in life from the union workhouses, their names, and often their addresses, are given and published; and whether he will give instructions that this shall be discontinued, and the cases merely referred to by numbers or initials?

\***MR. H. H. FOWLER**: I understand that the report which has suggested this question was a report made to the Guardians of the St. George's Union by the Metropolitan Association for Befriending Young Servants with reference to girls who have been placed out in service by the Guardians of that Union, and who have been visited on behalf of the Association. I have made inquiry of the Association, and find that the report in question was sent by them to the Guardians in manuscript. It appears to me that the report would be of little value to the Guardians unless the names of the girls to whom it refers were given, and also the addresses where necessary. The report has been printed, but I assume that this has been done by the direction of the Guardians with a view to a copy being supplied to each Guardian. I entirely concur in the view that there should be no publicity given to these reports, which I think should be regarded as confidential documents for the exclusive use of the Guardians, and I am making further inquiries of the Guardians on the subject.

#### LIGHTHOUSE COMMUNICATION.

**MR. JAMES LOWTHER** (Kent, Thanet): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether it is the intention of the Government, without any further delay, to carry out the unanimous recommendation made in December last by the Royal Commission on Electrical Communication with Lighthouses, &c.—namely, that the Goodwin (North Sand Head), Kentish Knock, Shipwash, Hansborough, and Scarworthy light vessels be immediately connected?

**MR. MUNDELLA**: The recommendations of the Royal Commission will be carefully considered by a Departmental Committee, but I am not yet in a position to announce a final decision.

**MR. JAMES LOWTHER**: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that the Commission recommended that these light vessels should be immediately connected?

**MR. MUNDELLA**: If the right hon. Gentleman will look at the Report he will

find pointed out the difficulty of doing this. The Board of Trade have communicated with Trinity House, and there will be no unavoidable delay.

**MR. JAMES LOWTHER**: I shall take the earliest opportunity of bringing this matter under the notice of the House.

#### RENT APPEALS.

**MR. MOLLOY** (King's Co., Birr): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland if he can, and will, take some steps to prevent the great delay in fixing rents by the Court, and lessen the injury caused to tenants by the delay now endured?

\***MR. J. MORLEY**: The Land Commissioners inform me that on August 22, 1888, there were 61,317 applications to fix fair rents outstanding; that on December 31, 1891, this number was reduced to 9,398; and on December 31, 1892, it was still further reduced to 6,581. There are at present 24 Lay Assistant Commissioners continually employed. The Commissioners add that by simplification of procedure and otherwise they do all in their power to promote expedition, so far as is consistent with efficiency and the proper consideration of the cases to be adjudicated upon.

**MR. FLYNN** (Cork, N.): Have not some cases in Cork County been pending for years?

**MR. J. MORLEY**: The Commissioners are making special efforts now to clear their lists.

**MR. MOLLOY**: Will the right hon. Gentleman take any steps to hurry them on?

**MR. J. MORLEY**: I have no authority over the Land Commissioners. I will, however, transmit to them any representations that reach me.

#### TOTTENHAM FEVER HOSPITAL.

**MR. HOWARD** (Middlesex, Tottenham): I beg to ask the Parliamentary Secretary to the Local Government Board whether he can say if any, and what, decision has been come to by the Board with reference to the application of the Metropolitan Asylums Board to extend the time for the reception of patients in the temporary fever hospital at St. Ann's Road, Tottenham?

*Mr. Bartley*

**\*MR. H. H. FOWLER :** I have given instructions to hold a public inquiry with reference to the proposal of the Managers of the Metropolitan Asylum District that the land in question should be permanently appropriated as a site for a fever hospital.

#### WHITE FISHING IN SOLWAY FIRTH.

**SIR HERBERT MAXWELL (Wigton) :** I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland if the provisions of the Sea Fisheries Regulation (Scotland) Bill may be extended so as to apply to the white fishing industry on the Scottish shores of the Solway Firth, in accordance with the recommendation of the Departmental Committee which reported last year?

**SIR G. TREVELYAN :** In reply to a question of the hon. Member for Wigtownshire on the 23rd February last, I stated that the Fishery Bill, which will be brought forward very shortly, relates to the general deep-sea fisheries of Scotland. When that has been disposed of, the Government will do its best to deal with the salmon fisheries, with special reference to the Tweed and to the Solway. The white fishings of the Solway are so mixed up with the salmon and the general fishing of the Solway that they cannot be taken apart.

**SIR H. MAXWELL :** Is the right hon. Gentleman aware there is nothing in the recommendations of the Committee over which I had the honour to preside to prevent the extension of the existing regulations?

**SIR G. TREVELYAN :** It is impossible to deal with this question by itself.

#### SPARKBROOK FACTORY.

**Mr. JESSE COLLINGS (Birmingham, Bordesley) :** I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War if he will state the number of persons employed in the Royal Small Arms Factory, Sparkbrook, Birmingham, on 1st August, 1892, and on 1st March, 1893, and the number of persons employed in the Enfield Factory on the same dates?

**\*MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN :** August 1, 1892, was a Bank Holiday, but on the previous working day 2,175 persons were employed at Enfield, and 714 at Sparkbrook. On March 1, 1893, there were 2,205 at Enfield, and 664 at

Sparkbrook. I may remark that several classes of work performed at Enfield, and on which no reduction is required, are not executed at Sparkbrook.

**MR. A. CHAMBERLAIN (Worcestershire, E.) :** I beg, on behalf of my right hon. Friend the Member for West Birmingham, to ask the Secretary of State for War why the Estimate for wages for the Government Factory at Sparkbrook, Birmingham, has been reduced in greater proportion than the similar Estimate for Enfield?

**MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN :** I regret that it will be necessary to reduce, in all the Government Factories under the War Department, the amount of production. But the hon. Gentleman will see that, if the Bagot Street and Sparkbrook establishments are taken together, the reduction is in very much the same proportion as at Enfield.

**MR. A. CHAMBERLAIN :** May I ask if there is any special reason for reducing the Sparkbrook Vote out of proportion with the Enfield Vote?

**\*MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN :** I have just explained that the reduction is not out of proportion.

#### INSANITARY TUG BOATS ON THE THAMES.

**MR. HAVELOCK WILSON (Middlesbrough) :** I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board whether he is aware that the Medical Officer of the Port of London has declared that in many cases the tug boats on the River Thames are in an insanitary condition, particularly with regard to the source of drinking water which is taken from the river, and which he describes as a most dangerous proceeding; and what steps can be taken to prevent the development of disease among the floating population through this practice?

**\*MR. H. H. FOWLER :** I have communicated with the Medical Officer of the Port of London on the subject of this question, and he informs me that there is some foundation for the report as to the insanitary condition of some of the steam tugs on the Upper Thames, although it cannot be said that, generally, they are in a bad state. He is making a close and careful inspection of these tugs, and is requiring that defects shall be remedied. In the case of any tugs where it is known that water has been obtained from the

river the Medical Officer insists upon the emptying of the water vessels, and after warning the master of the tug as to the danger communicates with the owners, with a view to such instructions being given as will prevent the use for drinking purposes of water taken direct from the river.

#### LASCAR SEAMEN.

MR. HAVELOCK WILSON: I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade if his attention has been called to the *Peninsular and Oriental steamship Kaisar-i-Hind*, which sailed from Portsmouth with over 600 men, women, and children on board belonging to the North Staffordshire Regiment, and which vessel was manned by Lascars; and will he inform the House whether there are any regulations providing that all vessels carrying British troops shall be manned by competent seamen; and will he state whether it is intended in future to take steps to prevent troop-ships sailing with a large number of passengers being manned by Lascars, having regard to the fact that at the recent inquiry into the loss of the steamship *Roumania* a British officer who had had considerable experience of Lascars stated that they were not reliable seamen in cold or stormy weather?

SIR U. KAY-SHUTTLEWORTH: Perhaps I may be allowed to answer this question. There is no regulation precluding the employment of Lascars in transports or hired ships conveying troops; nor is it thought that it would be either desirable or possible to refuse to employ as freight ships passenger steamers, like the *Peninsular and Oriental Company's* vessels, which are manned by Lascars. The regulations require that troop freight ships shall be as completely equipped and manned as the highest class of passenger steamers of similar size. The opinion referred to in the last sentence of the question was given by an officer of the Indian Staff Corps. No naval officer was on board the *Roumania*.

MR. W. S. CAINE (Bradford, E.): Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that these Lascar seamen are natives of British India, and are entitled to the same rights and privileges as the rest of Her Majesty's subjects?

Mr. H. H. Fowler

SIR U. KAY-SHUTTLEWORTH: No doubt that is so.

#### THE CASE OF L. OLSEN.

MR. HAVELOCK WILSON: I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade if his attention has been called to the case of L. Olsen, late second engineer of the s.s. *Blakemore*, who died on the voyage from the Tyne to the West Indies; if he is aware that the said L. Olsen had, at the time of his death, due to him the sum of £12 5s. for wages, which amount had been forwarded to the Norwegian Consul, instead of being sent to the wife and family of the said L. Olsen, he having sailed for over 19 years on British ships, and has a wife and family living at the Port of South Shields; and if, upon inquiry, he finds the money has been sent to the Norwegian Consul instead of to the wife of the said L. Olsen, what steps, if any, will be taken to see that the money and the effects of the late L. Olsen is delivered to the wife of the deceased man?

MR. MUNDELLA: The seaman referred to by the hon. Member was a Swedish subject, and, in accordance with an agreement entered into with the Swedish Government in 1863, his wages and effects must be handed over to the Representative of the Swedish Government in this country. As the man has left a widow in this country the Board of Trade endeavoured to induce the Swedish Authorities to allow the wages, amounting to £12 5s., and the effects to be handed over to her; but I have within the last few days been informed by the Swedish Consul General that the mother of the deceased man refuses to waive her claim upon the estate. The widow has been advised to apply to the Consul General, and will, no doubt, receive the portion of the estate to which under the Swedish law she may be entitled.

#### SUNDAY IN POLITICAL CLUBS.

MR. HULSE (Salisbury): I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if his attention has been called to the statements made in an article in the *Evening News and Post* of Monday the 6th instant as to the proceedings in certain political clubs on Sunday; and whether the police and Excise authorities have been, or could be, instructed to

take steps to prevent this alleged violation of the law?

**SIR W. HARCOURT :** Since this question has been put down I have seen the article referred to, which seems of a somewhat sensational character. The Inland Revenue, in the last 12 months, have obtained 15 convictions of bogus clubs in the Metropolitan area, and fines have been inflicted, where evidence can be procured.

**MR. HULSE :** Is the Government prepared to direct the attention of the Excise authorities to what goes on in these so-called clubs on Sundays?

**SIR W. HARCOURT :** Their attention has been drawn to it, and 15 convictions have been obtained as a result.

#### THE EVICTED TENANTS COMMISSION.

**MR. DARLING (Deptford) :** I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland when the Government received the Report of the Evicted Tenants Commission, presided over by Sir James Mathew; and when it will be presented to Parliament?

\***MR. J. MORLEY :** It will, I believe, be presented to-day.

#### THE PROPOSED FEVER HOSPITAL AT TOOTING.

**MR. KIMBER (Wandsworth) :** I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board whether he will extend the instructions of the gentleman whom he has authorised to hold the public inquiry with reference to the proposed fever hospital on Tooting Common, so as to allow them to receive evidence not only that the proposed site is objectionable in itself, but also evidence (which they have not felt able under their existing instructions to receive) that the site is inferior to other sites which are obtainable in the same district at a less cost to the public purse, and not open to the same objections; and, if there be any rule or reason against extending such instructions, whether he will allow such evidence to be laid before himself afterwards?

\***MR. H. H. FOWLER :** The experienced Inspectors who conducted the inquiry as to the proposed fever hospital acted in accordance with the practice of the Local Government Board, and I see no reason for interfering with their dis-

cretion. The inquiry was limited to the proposal to acquire a specified site, and such an inquiry could not properly have been extended to other sites, in respect of which there was no proposal of the Managers of the Metropolitan Asylum District before the Local Government Board, and with regard to which no notice had been given to those interested in the localities where the sites are situate. Any information that can be given as to sites which are available for hospital purposes, and which are considered to be more suitable than the site in question, should be submitted in the first instance to the Asylum Managers, and I shall be prepared to receive and consider a copy of any communication which may be addressed to the Managers on the subject.

#### CORDITE.

**MR. COCHRANE (Ayrshire, N.) :** I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War if his attention has been drawn to the fact that the War Office, during the month of September last, invited rival manufacturers to witness the process of manufacture of nitro-glycerine and the whole process of making cordite at Waltham Abbey, notwithstanding that the validity of the cordite patent was then in dispute; whether he is aware that a large portion of such processes are the result of many years of special experience in the manufacture of nitro-glycerine explosives, and were shown in confidence to officials of the Government by the inventor and owners of the Nobel Ballistite Patents, before it was known that the Government had any intention of attempting to take out patents (now the subject of litigation) for the manufacture of any similar powder; and whether he will cause an inquiry to be made into the circumstances of the case?

**MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN :** As the whole question of cordite patents is the subject of impending legal proceedings, I think that the hon. Member will see that I can hardly answer his question.

#### TUBERCULOSIS.

**MR. WILLIAM WHITELAW (Perth) :** I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board how many carcasses of home-bred cattle were cou-

demned on account of tuberculosis during last year?

**MR. H. H. FOWLER** : I have no information as to the number of carcasses of cattle which were condemned by Justices on account of tuberculosis during last year.

**MR. LEES KNOWLES** (Salford, W.) : Will the right hon. Gentleman try to obtain the information from Medical Officers of Health and Sanitary Inspectors?

**MR. H. H. FOWLER** : If a Motion is put on the Paper the Government will consider if it can be granted.

**MR. LEES KNOWLES** : I will put it down.

#### MOONLIGHTING IN LIMERICK.

**MR. WILLIAM KENNY** : I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland if his attention has been directed to the reports in the public Press of the proceedings at the Limerick Assizes, before Mr. Justice Gibson, on Saturday last, from which it appears that four men were tried for moonlighting with blackened faces, that apparently the Judge was convinced of their guilt, and that the jury acquitted them; and whether these reports are accurate; and, if so, whether he will endeavour to stop the further development of crime in the County of Limerick, by directing that future cases of moonlighting in that county shall be tried in some other venue?

**MR. J. MORLEY** : My attention has been drawn to the proceedings in the case referred to and to the observations of Mr. Justice Gibson. Four men were indicted under the Whiteboy Act, and the jury acquitted them on all counts. The Judge, in his Charge to the jury, said—

"The case was not attended with any violence, and the offence was not an aggravated one; still it was the duty of jurors to put down such a system of lawlessness by idle youths visiting houses for the purpose of raising money with or without violence, otherwise if it remained unchecked by jurors they themselves would sooner or later pay the penalty of their cowardice."

He had already stated that, pending the next Assizes for the county, the Crown would consider what course it would be proper to pursue.

*Mr. William Whitelaw*

#### LANDLORDS AND THE YEOMANRY.

**MR. BRUNNER** (Cheshire, Northwich) : I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether his attention has been called to the notice to quit served on Mr. Joseph Knowles, of Yew Tree Farm, Appleton, Cheshire, by his landlord, Colonel Piers Egerton Warburton, by reason of the former's refusal to serve, personally, in the Arley Troop of the Earl of Chester's Yeomanry Cavalry, though sending a substitute; and whether such method of recruiting the Yeomanry is sanctioned by the War Office?

**\*MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN** : I have no knowledge of this case except through paragraphs in newspapers. The Secretary of State for War has no concern with the particular conditions enforced by a landlord in an agricultural lease. But I can imagine nothing more unfavourable to the interests of the Yeomanry Force than the existence of a burdensome provision such as is described.

#### THE CONGO FREE STATE.

**MR. PICTON** (Leicester) : I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether the attention of Her Majesty's Government has been directed to the Royal Decree signed by King Leopold, as Sovereign of the Congo Free State, on 29th September, 1891, declaring his intention to preserve for the use of the State the fruits of its domains, notably ivory and rubber; the Royal Decree of 25th July, 1892, declaring that the right of hunting elephants is interdicted throughout the territories of the State, except by special permission; and the Royal Decree of 30th October, 1892, prohibiting all trade with natives in rubber, except by the State, over districts therein specified, and comprising, at least, half of the whole area of the Congo Free State; and whether Her Majesty's Government, as one of the signatories to the Berlin Treaty of 1885, has protested against those Decrees as violations of its first Article, which stipulated that the trade of all nations shall enjoy complete freedom in all the regions forming the basin of the Congo and its outlets?

**\*THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS** (Sir E. GREY, Northumberland, Ber-

wick): The attention of Her Majesty's Government has been called to the Decree of October 30th, which carried out the intention stated in the first part of the question. It is doubtful whether, and if so how far, the doctrine of State domains in Africa is inconsistent with the Free Trade established in the Zone by the Berlin Act, and Her Majesty's Government have, therefore, not protested against it. They have, however, made inquiries as to the policy of the Congo State, and it is possible that the Decree will shortly be modified. The Decree of July 25th has not been communicated. If it merely makes regulations against the uncontrolled slaughter of elephants it would not be contrary to the spirit of the Act. It will be obtained and examined.

#### MILITARY CLERKS.

**MR. GEORGE ALLSOPP** (Worcester): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War if he can inform the House of the number of Non-Commissioned Officers and men borne on the rolls of their regiment and employed as clerks in the War Office and Departmental Head Quarters and receiving pay in addition to their regimental pay?

**MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN**: The number of military clerks such as are described by the hon. Member is 11.

**MR. BROOKFIELD** (Sussex, Rye): Is there any objection to giving this civil employment to discharged soldiers and Army Reserve men?

**MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN**: That subject is not included in the question upon the Paper. It is a matter of policy and of opinion, which I am not bound to answer.

**COLONEL HOWARD VINCENT**: I beg to give notice that I will raise the question upon the Estimates.

#### THE SPARKBROOK FACTORY.

**MR. JESSE COLLINGS**: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War if it is the intention of the Government to remove the repairing department in Bagot Street, Birmingham, to the Royal Small Arms Factory, Sparkbrook?

**MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN**: In answer to the last part of the question, I have to point out that one is in the Army Estimate and the other in the

Ordnance Estimate. It is at present intended that the inspection and repairing Establishment at Bagot Street, Birmingham, should be maintained at least for another year.

#### MAGAZINE RIFLES.

**MR. JESSE COLLINGS**: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War if he will state the cost of magazine rifles (per rifle) made at Enfield and at the Royal Small Arms Factory, Birmingham?

**MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN**: It is very difficult to form a very exact estimate; but the cost is about £3 15s., and the difference between the two establishments appears to be very slight.

#### ILLITERATE VOTERS.

**MR. WEBSTER** (St. Pancras, E.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he can now give the House some definite assurance as to when the Return of Illiterate Voters at the last General Election, ordered in August last year and laid upon the Table, will be circulated; and, if not, what is the cause of the delay?

**MR. ASQUITH**: I am not responsible for the circulation of the Return, but I will cause inquiries to be made.

**MR. WEBSTER**: Has the Return been presented to the House?

**MR. ASQUITH**: Yes; a long time ago.

#### CRIMEAN PENSION ARREARS.

**MR. HANBURY** (Preston): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War what are the regulations as to the payment of arrears of pension to Crimean veterans, or other pensioners, who have earned a pension, who have gone abroad for some years and have on returning home been restored to the Pension List?

**\*MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN**: As regards foreign residence pensioners fall into two classes, those under and those over 50. The former cannot draw pension in a foreign country; the latter may. A man under 50 returning from abroad may be reinstated on the Pension List, but he can receive nothing for any period he was out of Her Majesty's dominions.

**MR. HANBURY**: I have had several letters in which the writers say they have had three years granted. Is that to be the regular maximum?

**MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN :** The regular limit is one year, but in some cases a liberal interpretation is put upon the regulations.

#### THE KACHIN HILLS.

**MR. GIBSON BOWLES** (Lynn Regis) : I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether his attention has been called to a telegram in *The Times* of 6th March, dated Rangoon 5th March, in which it is stated that it has been decided that all active operations in the Kachin Hills, east of the Irawaddy, are to cease, and also, that a Chinese officer had been killed near Sima, during the recent fighting; whether he is able to confirm these statements; and whether he can supplement them by any further information?

**\*SIR E. GREY :** Yes; the statement is correct. The officers on the spot reported the rising as over, and on the 28th of February the Viceroy of India telegraphed that the work of the Eastern Columnus may be considered closed for this season. Her Majesty's Government have received no information bearing on the report that a Chinese officer had been killed near Sima; and they have no further information on the subject of the hon. Member's questions.

#### THE UNIFICATION OF LONDON.

**MR. LODER** (Brighton) : I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board whether it is in accordance with the usual precedent to announce the name of a member of a Royal Commission before it has been submitted to Her Majesty for approval; and whether, having communicated to the London County Council the name of Sir Thomas Farrer as the representative of the views of that body on the Royal Commission relating to the amalgamation of the City and County of London, he has also communicated to the City authorities the name of the gentleman he proposes should serve on that Commission as representative of their views; and, if so, whether he has any objection to stating his name?

**\*MR. H. H. FOWLER :** When I informed the House of the proposed Commission relating to the amalgamation of the City and County of London I stated that it would consist of five members, of whom one would be selected as representing the

London County Council and one as representing the City of London. It was therefore thought desirable to ascertain whether the person whom the Government considered to be qualified to represent the views of the London County Council would be acceptable to that body, before his name was submitted to Her Majesty for her approval. A similar course has been pursued with regard to the person whom the Government considered as suitable to represent the City of London.

#### THE NEW LABOUR CORRESPONDENTS.

**MR. DALZIEL** (Kirkcaldy, &c.) : I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade what are the special duties of the new Labour Correspondents, and will they be expected to furnish reliable information with regard to the number of workmen employed?

**COLONEL HOWARD VINCENT :** Will my right hon. Friend be so good as to say what salary or remuneration is to be paid to those provincial correspondents of the Labour Department; and if, having in view that some of those whose nomination appears in to-day's papers are well-known Gladstonian propagandists, they will be strictly forbidden, as public servants, to engage henceforward in any active political work?

**MR. MUNDELLA :** I ought to have notice of that question.

**COLONEL HOWARD VINCENT :** I will repeat it on Monday.

**MR. MUNDELLA :** A statement on this and other matters pertaining to the organisation and work of the Labour Department will be presented to the House immediately after Easter, as already promised. It will, however, be one of their duties to give information on the subject mentioned by the hon. Member.

**MR. DALZIEL :** Will they report from personal observation, or will any machinery be provided for securing them the information they require?

**MR. MUNDELLA :** Perhaps the hon. Gentleman will wait until I make a full statement to the House on the subject.

#### NOSS HEAD.

**DR. CLARK :** I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland whether anything has been done in reference to the pro-

posed fog signal on Noss Head, promised to be erected last year?

SIR G. TREVELYAN: I can find no trace in the Scottish Office of any promise to erect a fog signal on Noss Head. The Commission of Northern Lights reported last November that this fog signal should be erected, but they did not attach the first importance to it. The funds of that Commission are derived from the Board of Trade, and the Scottish Office has no control over them.

DR. CLARK: I will ask the President of the Board of Trade a question on this subject on another day.

#### ANTHRAX.

MR. FELLOWES (Hunts, Ramsey): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Agriculture if he will issue an Order authorising the Local Authorities to grant compensation not exceeding the dead carcase value of any animal which has died of anthrax, provided proper notice of the existence of the disease has been given by the owner; and, should he have no powers to issue such Order, if he will embody such a clause in any Bill relating to contagious animal diseases which he may introduce this Session?

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF AGRICULTURE (MR. H. GARDNER, Essex, Saffron Walden): I have no power under the law as it stands to issue an Order to the effect proposed, and indeed I should have thought that the carcase of an animal which has died of anthrax did not possess any value at all. I shall, however, be happy to make a note of the hon. Member's suggestion, and to give it my careful consideration.

#### THE UNEMPLOYED.

MR. KEIR-HARDIE (West Ham, S.): I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board whether he has any information concerning the numbers of unemployed persons in the different centres of industry, and the measures which are being taken by Boards of Guardians, Vestries, Town Councils, or Unemployed Committees for the relief of the unemployed; and, if he is not in possession of such information, whether he will agree to a Return giving this information?

\*MR. H. H. FOWLER: It is proposed to address communications to Local Authorities with the view of ascertain-

ing what measures have been, and are being, taken by them as regards the execution of works which afford means of employment to persons who otherwise would be unemployed. I am unable to give any information as to the actual number of unemployed persons in the different centres of industry. It appears to me that it would be extremely difficult to obtain accurate particulars as to these numbers.

#### THE TITHE QUESTION.

VISCOUNT CRANBORNE (Rochester): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Agriculture whether he is correctly reported to have stated to a deputation of Essex farmers on the 23rd February, that the Government could not possibly deal with them (the tithes) without further investigation, for the Act passed by the late Government was admitted to be a failure, and that the question would be dealt with by the Select Committee about to be appointed; if he will say in what respect the Act of the late Government is a failure; when the Select Committee is to be appointed; and whether he can yet state what the terms of the Reference will be?

MR. H. GARDNER: I have not seen the report to which the noble Lord refers, but I gather from his question that it does not accurately embody the remarks I addressed to the Essex deputation. What I did say was this: that inasmuch as several of the speakers at the deputation had declared that the Tithe Act passed by the late Government had been a failure, there could be no doubt that the question was one which could not fail to receive the attention of the Committee which was to be appointed. The terms of the Reference to that Committee were placed on the Notice Paper nearly three weeks ago, and I should be in a position to move for the Committee on Monday next, if the noble Lord would use his influence with the right hon. Gentleman the Member for the Sleaford Division to withdraw his opposition.

#### SCOTLAND AND THE IMPERIAL EXCHEQUER.

MR. HUNTER (Aberdeen, N.): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether the Government will consent to



the appointment of a Committee to inquire into the financial relations of Scotland to the Imperial Exchequer, in continuation of the inquiry commenced but not concluded in the last Parliament into the financial relations of England, Ireland, and Scotland?

**THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY** (Mr. W. E. GLADSTONE, Edinburgh, Midlothian): I much regret the delay which has occurred with regard to this matter, but since last year Irish finance has been put into a position which must make it certain that it will undergo the thorough consideration of the House; and, that being so, I am of opinion that it would not be expedient to appoint a Committee at the present time to examine into the Scotch portion of the subject, for the reason that a great deal of light will be thrown on the subject by the discussion which will take place on the Irish branch of the question.

**DR. CLARK:** Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that the present relations are based on a Return of four years ago, and that in one case a sum of £18,500 too little was allocated to Scotland?

**MR. W. E. GLADSTONE:** I am not conversant with the details.

**MR. HUNTER:** I beg to give the right hon. Gentleman notice that I shall take the first opportunity that offers to call attention to the fact that Scotland is overcharged to the extent of £1,500,000 per annum.

#### COUNTY JUSTICES.

**MR. BRAND** (Cambridge, Wisbech): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether, in view of the fact that about 90 per cent. of the Justices of the Peace (county) are now drawn from one Political Party, the Government intend to take any action in this matter, with a view to altering the present state of affairs?

**MR. W. E. GLADSTONE:** This question is one of very considerable difficulty and, at the same time, of importance. I cannot make any definite statement at the present moment. The subject has been under the active consideration of the Government, and correspondence has taken place upon it. I should think that in the course of a very small number of weeks I may be able to give a more definite answer to the ques-

*Mr. Hunter*

tion. I am not cognisant of the fact that the proportion is 90 per cent.

**MR. LODER:** Is the right hon. Gentleman in a similar state of uncertainty as to the politics of gentlemen appointed by the Lord Chancellor to the Borough Benches?

[No answer was given.]

#### IMPERIAL FINANCE.

**MR. COCHRANE:** I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether, in view of the fact that for the purposes of the Government of Ireland Bill of 1886, it was considered an equitable contribution for Ireland to pay £4,242,000 per annum towards the Imperial charges of the United Kingdom, and also, in view of his recent statement that in future he proposes that Ireland is only to pay a contribution estimated at £2,370,000 per annum, will Scotland be called upon to make up any part of the deficiency caused by the difference between these two sums?

**MR. W. E. GLADSTONE:** In my opinion, subjects of this kind are not conveniently raised by questions on the Paper, but they belong properly to discussions on the various stages of the Bill. It is especially unfortunate when questions of this kind are asked that they should be based upon figures which are entirely inaccurate. The errors into which the hon. Member has been betrayed are of a most serious character. He has forgotten that in the Bill of 1886 the sum of £1,400,000 was credited to the Irish Revenue which did not belong to it, and it also appears that he has overstated by £640,000 the amount of the contribution from Ireland.

**\*MR. COCHRANE:** Will the right hon. Gentleman state the difference, whatever it may be?

**MR. W. E. GLADSTONE:** It appears to me that the hon. Member is not in a condition to say as yet there is a difference. He had better make a careful re-examination of the subject before he again ventures to ask the question.

**MR. A. CROSS:** May I, as a Scotch Member, say that there is no difference.

#### THE EMPLOYERS' LIABILITY ACT.

**MR. WOODS** (Lancashire, Ince): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treas-

sury whether he is aware that a very strong desire exists among the working classes of the country for a complete and satisfactory Employers' Liability Act; that great dissatisfaction now prevails with regard to the existing Act on this subject; and whether, in view of these circumstances, he will give early and sufficient facilities to enable the Bill now before Parliament to pass its Second Reading on an early date?

**MR. W. E. GLADSTONE:** We shall carefully look for an opportunity of taking the Second Reading of this Bill before Easter, if possible. I hope and desire very much that it may be possible, but I am not now in a position to make any definite statement on the subject.

#### HOME RULE AND TOBACCO.

**MR. PROVAND** (Glasgow, Blackfriars): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether, in view of the fact that after the passing of the Home Rule Bill the Irish Government will have no revenue of their own from the article, the Imperial Government will continue to control and supervise the manufacture of tobacco in Ireland, as is done at present throughout the United Kingdom; and will any, and if so what, steps be taken to ensure that no tobacco can be imported into Great Britain from Ireland of a purity less than is required by law at present, and generally, under what conditions the manufacture of tobacco will be carried on in Ireland after the passing of the Home Rule Bill?

**MR. W. E. GLADSTONE:** The management of this subject is at present under the control of the Excise. If the fiscal arrangements proposed in the Irish Government Bill should be adopted in the state in which they now stand, and should receive in that way the sanction of Parliament, it is probable that a change in them will be necessary; but I think it would be inconvenient to enter upon the consideration of that matter until we have received the stamp of the authority of the House to the arrangement.

**MR. A. J. BALFOUR:** Are we right in believing that in the Home Rule Bill as it at present stands there is no machinery for dealing with the question of the adulteration of tobacco?

**MR. W. E. GLADSTONE:** No change is proposed in the machinery as the Bill now stands. Whether a change ought to be made will depend upon the form which the fiscal proposals of the Bill take. I must not as yet assume that in every particular of administration as well as of taxation they will be certain to receive the sanction of the House without any alteration.

**MR. A. J. BALFOUR:** Then the actual proposals of the Government are that this important branch of Imperial Revenue should be looked after by purely Irish officials?

**MR. W. E. GLADSTONE:** No; the consideration of the question is postponed until we know what the decision of the House may be on the subject of administration—I may add, in common I have no doubt with a great number of other matters of detail, the consideration of which, at the present moment, would be entirely premature, and would lead to nothing but confusion.

#### THE SCOTCH SUSPENSORY BILL.

**SIR MARK STEWART** (Kirkcudbright): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether it is the intention of Her Majesty's Government to bring in a Suspensory Bill for the Church of Scotland; and, if so, whether it will be introduced before Easter?

**MR. W. E. GLADSTONE:** I am not in a position to make any further announcement on the subject of the Suspensory Bill.

**SIR M. STEWART:** In view of the importance of this matter, I shall repeat my question on Monday.

**MR. W. E. GLADSTONE:** My answer stands for Monday as well as for to-day.

#### THE OPIUM QUESTION.

**SIR M. STEWART:** I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury if it is the intention of Her Majesty's Government to bring in a Bill, with a view to legislation, on the opium question this Session, in accordance with the Resolution passed by this House in 1891?

**MR. W. E. GLADSTONE:** The Secretary for India is sensible that a strong sentiment exists upon this subject among an important section of the public; but I am not able to say that Her

Majesty's Government have arrived at any view on the subject which would enable them to promise any measure during the present Session.

#### THE COURSE OF BUSINESS.

**MR. W. E. GLADSTONE:** I wish to give the House some information as to the course of business before Easter. We intend to proceed with the Estimates, as is necessary, in order to comply with the provisions of the law: the Army Estimates, Vote 1 of the Navy Estimates—which I am given to understand will, after the substantial discussion of the other night, pass with a little more expenditure of time—the remaining Supplementary Estimates, and, finally, the Vote on Account. The Government propose to fix the Vote for the Evicted Tenants Commission for Monday, and it will, therefore, be necessary to postpone the Irish Government Bill, which now stands for Monday, until Thursday, and I intend to move the Bill that day, and to assign to it Thursday and the following days, so far as depends upon us. In the present state of Public Business, it may be necessary to make appeals to the patriotism of the House to accede to arrangements entailing some sacrifice of its convenience—whether it be by Saturday Sittings or by abridging the period usually appropriated to the Easter Recess. I gather that this is not an agreeable announcement, but I apprehend that the first duty of the House is that the Public Business shall be done, and I assure the House that the Government will make no demand of that kind upon it except what might appear to us to be absolutely called for by the interests of the country and the exigencies and necessities of the Public Service.

**MR. A. J. BALFOUR:** I rise to ask one or two questions in order that we may clearly understand exactly what the views of the Government are. Am I right in supposing that the right hon. Gentleman in fixing a date for the discussion of the Evicted Tenants Commission means to bring on the Estimate, and that the discussion shall take place first on Monday, whatever may happen to the other Estimates?

**MR. W. E. GLADSTONE:** Yes.

**MR. A. J. BALFOUR:** May I ask him, in the second place—of course I do not ask

for any declaration in regard to the Easter holidays—what views he has with regard to Saturday Sittings? My own view is that a Saturday Sitting, while imposing unquestionable inconvenience on the House, and imposing unquestionable hardships on the officers of the House, is not likely in matters of Supply greatly to further the progress of Public Business. However that may be, I think the Government should give us full notice of their intention to put down a Resolution for a Saturday Sitting, in order that we may take steps to see that the matter is thoroughly threshed out, and I should be glad to know whether the right hon. Gentleman means to put down for to-morrow before the commencement of Public Business a Resolution requiring us to sit on Saturday. The only other question that I have to ask is with regard to the Notice of Motion which the right hon. Gentleman has placed on the Paper to-day. I should like to ask him whether the Government have placed that notice on the Paper with the same view and intention as they placed a similar notice on the Paper last Monday? At that time the Chancellor of the Exchequer informed us that all the Government desired to attain by the temporary abrogation of the Twelve o'Clock Rule was, not to prolong our Sitting, but to prevent the striking of the clock intervening between the House and a decision which the House was prepared to arrive at. If the Government can assure the House that they do not intend to prolong the Sitting to-night, but merely to prevent any inconvenience that may arise from some hon. Gentleman talking out the question before the House, as sometimes happens, I shall certainly not do anything to embarrass the Government. I think we ought to know exactly what are the intentions of the Government.

**MR. W. E. GLADSTONE:** I wish to say, in reply to the first question of the right hon. Gentleman, that the Vote for the Evicted Tenants Commission will be taken first on Monday, irrespective of the position in which we may stand in respect of any other business. As to the second question, I must make an apology to the House for not stating that it is my intention to move to-morrow for a Sitting on the day after to-morrow. We shall not repeat that Motion unless rigid necessity should

*Mr. W. E. Gladstone*

appear to compel us to do so. As regards the third question, the right hon. Gentleman being satisfied with the terms in which the Chancellor of the Exchequer described his intention of moving the suspension of the Twelve o'Clock Rule last Monday, I may say that it is just with the same intention that we propose it now. It was done repeatedly in the time of the late Government, and it was a perfectly reasonable proceeding. There is no intention on the part of the Government to make it a heavy post-midnight Sitting, but merely to prevent the interference of the Twelve o'Clock Rule with the main business of the evening, which we shall close within a reasonable time afterwards.

**MR. JAMES LOWTHER** : I understand that in the event of an Amendment to the Motion that the Speaker leave the Chair being under consideration, the Government would afford an opportunity for the discussion upon that Amendment being brought to a conclusion, but that no attempt would be made to proceed with other Amendments or any other questions.

**MR. W. E. GLADSTONE** : I am not going to enter into details, and I think I must take my stand on what I have already stated.

**\*SIR M. HICKS-BEACH** : In view of the announcement of the right hon. Gentleman with regard to Thursday next, I wish to ask the right hon. Gentleman whether any alterations that may be proposed in the schedules or clauses of the Home Rule Bill relating to finance will be laid on the Table before the Second Reading? I gathered from the Chief Secretary, at the close of the Debate on the introduction of the Bill, that the clauses were not presented in their final shape, and there are two blank schedules. I do not know whether the right hon. Gentleman has any information to communicate to the House on these matters.

**MR. W. E. GLADSTONE** : There is no information to communicate as regards the clauses of the Bill which would in any way affect the votes of hon. Members. There is one clause of the Bill, with respect to Excise, the particular terms of which I do not think can be regarded as absolutely fixed. The two schedules are not yet filled; but with regard to one, at any rate, I think it is

the intention of my right hon. Friend to give information before the Second Reading, and if the right hon. Gentleman puts a question to-morrow he may obtain a distinct answer from my right hon. Friend the Chief Secretary for Ireland.

**MR. A. J. BALFOUR** : There is one point on which I find my hon. Friends near me take a different view of the statement of the right hon. Gentleman from that I gathered from his words. I understood him to say that the Government proposes to take the Home Rule Bill on Thursday next, but a stronger interpretation has been put upon the words by some hon. Gentlemen, who appeared to understand what I cannot quite credit—namely, that, whatever the condition of Public Business may be, and however necessary that Supply must be obtained, Supply must be put on on one side in order that the Home Rule Bill may be taken.

**MR. W. E. GLADSTONE** : My statement was that we would take the Home Rule Bill on Thursday next and following days, for the Second Reading of that Bill. I do not think I can add anything to that. With respect to Supply, there may be contingencies, but I am not able to make any calculation which would lead to the anticipations of the right hon. Gentleman.

**MR. A. J. BALFOUR** : I want no calculations from the right hon. Gentleman, and it is quite possible he may get all the Supply he wants by Wednesday. But what we want to know is whether we are to regard the Home Rule Bill as being absolutely fixed for Thursday, as the Evicted Tenants Commission is fixed for Monday?

**MR. W. E. GLADSTONE** : Certainly.

**MR. JAMES LOWTHER** : I wish to ask the right hon. Gentleman whether the statement made by the Patronage Secretary to the Treasury on Wednesday is correct, that the Government intend to get the Speaker out of the Chair to-night on the Army Estimates, and to force the Amendments to a conclusion in order to carry the Vote to-night?

**MR. HANBURY (Preston)** : I wish to know from the right hon. Gentleman whether if the Navy Estimates are not reached before 12 o'clock they will be taken after that hour?

**MR. W. E. GLADSTONE** : We shall be desirous to get forward as far as we

can, but we shall be guided by the feeling of the House. I should not be disposed to run counter to that feeling, unless for some object of a vital character. I do not think I can go further than that.

MR. JAMES LOWTHER: I think I am justified in asking the right hon. Gentleman whether he endorses the statement made yesterday by the Patronage Secretary, that the Government intend to get the Speaker out of the Chair to-night? If the right hon. Gentleman does so I shall divide against the Motion for the suspension of the Twelve o'clock Rule.

MR. W. E. GLADSTONE: We shall make all the progress we can with the Votes.

MR. JAMES LOWTHER: Then I will divide against the Motion.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I now understand the right hon. Gentleman to say that he proposes to get the Speaker out of the Chair to-night under any circumstances.

MR. W. E. GLADSTONE: I never said so.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: Then I am mistaken. I understand that the right hon. Gentleman adheres to the answer he gave me just now, that he has no wish whatever, no intention, of having any prolonged Sitting after Twelve o'clock.

MR. JAMES LOWTHER: He has never said so.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: Then we are to regard the termination of business to-night as wholly irrespective and independent of whether the Speaker is or is not out of the Chair?

VISCOUNT CRANBORNE: Is it the intention of the right hon. Gentleman to give notice of a similar Resolution to the one we have now submitted to us whenever Supply is put down as the principal business before the House? I would ask the right hon. Gentleman whether it would not be more in harmony with the ordinary practice of Parliament to submit a general Resolution, which we could discuss, if it be his intention, whenever Supply is put down as the principal business of the House, to suspend the Twelve o'clock Rule.

MR. W. E. GLADSTONE: If we had formed a Resolution of that kind, it would have been our duty to communicate it to the House, and I would not

*Mr. W. E. Gladstone*

have waited, before communicating it, to be reminded of it by the noble Lord.

MR. BARTLEY (Islington, N.): I wish to ask the right hon. Gentleman whether he is aware that the Twelve o'clock Rule has already been suspended five times, though this is only the sixth week of the Session, and whether he will not adopt the view of the noble Lord, and do away with the Rule altogether.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, order!

#### NEW MEMBER SWORN.

Right hon. Edward Heneage, for the Borough of Great Grimsby.

### MOTIONS.

#### SITTINGS OF THE HOUSE (EXEMPTION FROM THE STANDING ORDER.)

Motion made, and Question put,

"That the proceedings on Supply, if under discussion at Twelve o'clock this night, be not interrupted under the provisions of the Standing Order, Sittings of the House."—(*Mr. Gladstone.*)

The House divided:—Ayes 264; Noes 179.—(Division List, No. 25.)

MR. BARTLEY: I rise to order, Sir. The wrong numbers were given.

MR. SPEAKER: Point out what is wrong.

MR. BARTLEY: In announcing the numbers the Teller said, Ayes 274, and it should have been 264.

\*MR. MARJORIBANKS (Berwickshire): I beg to say, Sir, I deeply regret having made the mistake, but it was not made of malice prepense.

### ORDERS OF THE DAY.

#### SUPPLY.—COMMITTEE.

Order for Committee read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair."

#### LORD WANTAGE'S COMMITTEE.

\*VISCOUNT WOLMER (Edinburgh, W.) moved—

"That, in the opinion of this House, the present system of Military Administration fails to secure either due economy in time of peace or efficiency for national defence."

His remarks must not be taken in any sense as an attack upon the right hon. Gentleman the present Secretary of

State for War, nor upon the late Secretary of State for War (Mr. E. Stanhope), to whom the country owed a great deal for his administration of the War Office, nor were his remarks intended as an attack against the distinguished officers and civil servants who served the country in their office, but what he intended to put before the House were certain observations intended to show that the system those officers had to administer was not a system that tended to economy in time of peace nor efficiency for national defence. This system, if it might be called by that name, was the result, not of a definite policy of any Minister, not the result of any policy adopted by this House, but a description of patchwork for which many Ministers were responsible, and many Commissions. The hon. and gallant Member for Oxford (General Sir G. T. Chesney), who was going to second this Motion, would speak—and he was second to none as an authority in this country—as to the reason why the administration of the War Office was deficient; he could put his hands on the weak spots and point out why they were weak and had arisen from the present mis-called “system” of the War Office. He proposed to show from the last public document at the disposal of Parliament that the administration at the War Office was neither economical nor efficient. The public document to which he referred was known as the Report of Lord Wantage's Committee, and he took that as the basis of his remarks, because it was the last authoritative document on the subject. The points he proposed to make good were three. In the first place, he proposed to show that the War Office had induced the country to adopt schemes and a policy entailing vast expenditure, but the War Office itself had never carried them out, nor properly administered them. He proposed to show, in the second place, the War Office had wholly neglected to make provision against some very important and wholly certain contingencies. And, in the third place, he proposed to prove that the general condition of affairs in connection with the Home Army, produced by this maladministration, had become serious. The Administration of the right hon. Gentleman the present Prime Minister,

which began in 1869, was a great epoch in military reforms. Mr. Cardwell, as the War Minister of that Administration, initiated a policy which was worthy of the name. Hon. Members might have varying opinions as to the soundness or otherwise of that policy; but no one could deny it was a definite policy that Mr. Cardwell submitted to the House, and the House and the country adopted it. That policy, whether good or bad, involved a vast expenditure of money, and that expenditure having been incurred, or the liability of it having been contracted, that policy having been adopted by the House of Commons, it then devolved on the War Office to carry out that policy efficiently, and to administer the money economically. He was prepared to prove the War Office had not administered that policy, and *pro tanto* as that administration had been deficient so it had been uneconomical. In the Scheme of Mr. Cardwell a cardinal feature was that the number of battalions of the Army at home should never be less than the number abroad. He did not propose to argue whether the plan was a good one or a bad one; he did not propose to argue whether it was one that suited the requirements of the country or not; what he took as the basis of his statement was the incontrovertible fact that that was a cardinal feature of the policy which Mr. Cardwell represented to this House, and which this House adopted. Now, to what extent had the War Office carried out that part of Mr. Cardwell's policy? There were two ways of carrying it out. Either it could be rigidly interpreted that the number of battalions at home were always made to equal the numbers abroad, or when the number of battalions abroad were, through emergency, in excess large depôts might be formed at home, which would be tantamount to the formation of temporary third battalions. The War Office had done neither one thing nor the other, with the result that two years ago the state of affairs became very serious. The then Secretary of State appointed a Committee, and in paragraph 10 of the Report of that Committee it was stated

“The present difficulties are not attributable to short service as such, but to the failure of successive Governments to carry out the principles accepted in 1872, upon which the short

service organisation adopted in that year was based."

And, again, in paragraph 23—

"The system adopted for the Army in 1872, and which is the foundation of the present organisation of the Army, has never been carried out in its entirety, the provisions of the system which have not been carried out being precisely those essential to its successful working."

There was a Minority Report of that Committee, a very able Report by Sir Arthur Haliburton, who, differing from the Committee on many important points, was entirely at one with them in this respect. He would call the attention of the House to what Sir A. Haliburton said on this subject in paragraph 49 of his Report—

"It will be seen that the present difficulty is purely one of administration, and is not caused in any way by a general want of recruits or by insufficient inducement to men to enter the service."

A more remarkable paragraph could not be penned by a permanent official. From that it appeared that the critical and dangerous condition of affairs two years ago was solely owing to the mal-administration of the War Office. There was another very important feature in Mr. Cardwell's scheme. Mr. Cardwell thought that the forces ought to be localised, and proposed that every Infantry regiment should have a local connection with a given district, and the result of his policy was that now the country was covered with military centres, to each of which a regiment was attached for recruiting purposes. Up to the 31st March of last year, which was the last period for which the Returns were forthcoming, the total cost to the country of the Localisation of the Forces Act had been £3,457,353 14s. 1d.; but that did not represent by any means the total outlay on that particular part of Mr. Cardwell's policy, because not only had the country been covered with these expensive depôts, but each depôt had an extensive and expensive staff attached; therefore, the amount of money the country had to pay was much greater than the three and a half millions he had mentioned. Now, again, it was not his purpose to argue whether that part of Mr. Cardwell's policy was wise or unwise; he only stated it was an intrinsic part of his policy, that it was deliberately sanctioned by the House of Commons, and on that sanction an enormous

expenditure had taken place. And, again, he pointed out that that immense expenditure of money had been entrusted to the War Office to administer, that it had been left by the country to the War Office to carry out the principle involved in the Localisation of the Forces Act. Lord Wantage's Committee took a strong view on this subject, and in Paragraph 41 they gave their opinion as follows:—

"From their inquiry into this subject, the Committee have arrived at the conclusion that, regarded as a machinery for reaching men likely to, or inclined to, enlist into the Army, the present system, when thoroughly carried out, is probably the most suitable that can at present be devised to meet our requirements. In some districts it has been either misunderstood or administered without energy and intelligence; but in many cases it has been most thoroughly applied. Its main defects appear to be a certain want of elasticity in adapting special means to the requirements of special districts, and a tendency to over-centralisation of detail."

He asserted that to anybody who read the evidence that was given before the Committee that paragraph in the Report was nothing like sufficiently emphatic. He did not think the House would credit the state of things that was disclosed in the evidence with regard to that part of the administration of the War Office. It was quite true that in some districts great energy was found to exist, and the officer in charge of the recruiting showed great power of resource and great ability, with the result that recruiting was good and in a satisfactory condition, but that was entirely owing to the individual activity of the officers in authority in those districts, and had nothing to do with the system of the War Office. Would it be believed that it came out in evidence that the War Office had never supplied to a single district a map of its district? Officer after officer who came before the Committee was asked what was the population of his recruiting area?—he did not know; how many villages were there in his district?—he did not know; where did the recruits come from?—he did not know. It was no exaggeration to say the state of affairs disclosed in some districts showed complete apathy, an absolute want of any sort of energy or zeal; and no wonder, because, so far as the Committee could elicit, there was absolutely no provision on the part of the War

Office to superintend the work in these recruiting districts. It was even rather doubtful who was responsible. It was found out in evidence that the Inspector General of Recruiting had not been down to any district to inspect it for a long period, and altogether the real state of affairs was that the money having been spent, the War Office never paid the slightest attention to see whether the officers did their work. He was quite aware a different state of things existed at the present moment, that the Inspector General of Recruiting had effected a perfect revolution in his office, but that was owing to the fact that this evidence was brought forward by the Wantage Committee, so that the Inspector General knew the weak points of his office; but this was no excuse for the War Office, who had been entrusted with the administration of this vast machinery and this vast expenditure; it was no excuse for not taking reasonable precautions to see that the country got its value out of that machinery and money. It was also a fact that the Committee were unable to elicit that any difference was made in the future prospects between an enthusiastic officer, successful in recruiting, and an apathetic officer who allowed a good recruiting district to become a bad one. The Committee went so far as to make a variety of suggestions in connection with recruiting. They might be bad, or they might be good; some were obvious, and some had been adopted, but it was a slur on the administration of the War Office that it should be left with the Committee to make these suggestions. He thought he had shown that in two very important features of Mr. Cardwell's military policy the War Office had not carried out that policy, and although the country supposed it was being administered by the War Office, it had not in any sense been so administered. Now he came to the second point he proposed to make good, that the War Office had neglected to make any provision against some very important and wholly certain contingencies. The House had heard a good deal about having two Army Corps ready for active service. He did not propose to say a single word about those. There was a good deal of difference of opinion as to whether they existed or whether they were wanted. After provision for

garrisoning our Empire abroad and the defence of these Islands, he supposed it would be universally admitted that the most certainly recurring of all duties of the Army was taking part in small wars. The last 20 years had furnished numbers of examples of wars that were called small wars which were of varying importance. He took it that no one would deny that one of the primary duties of our Army was to be prepared for small expeditions. At the present moment, however, absolutely no provision was made for these emergencies—he meant that there was no force, however small, in this country ready to take part in a little war. Lord Wantage's Committee reported on this subject. In paragraph 13 of their Report they pointed out how there had been increasing pressure on the Home battalions for India and the Army abroad, and they went on to say that these various causes

“have forced the authorities to depart in practice from those principles of the organisation of 1872 which provided that a certain force at home should be kept in a fit condition for active service, and that Home battalions should not be regarded merely as recruiting agencies for battalions serving abroad.”

Sir Arthur Halliburton in his Report put the point in stronger language. In paragraph 104 he says—

“Unquestionably, after the expiration of some 10 years, when battalions had produced a reserve, and their ranks contained fewer old, and many young soldiers, the measures necessary to provide for small wars, for which the Reserve was not available, should have been considered and settled.”

Here, again, the permanent Under Secretary said this extremely important point of Army organisation should have been “considered and settled,” and yet after 21 years since the Report of the Committee of 1872 this point is not yet “considered and settled.” He goes on to say—

“Apparently we drifted into the position of thinking that because a number of battalions were kept on a higher establishment than the rest of the Home Army, therefore they could provide for this service as well as for ordinary foreign reliefs. This was clearly an error; the battalions on the higher establishments are in reality as inefficient for active service, without their reserves, as are those on the lower establishment. Raising them to a higher establishment only commences two years before they go abroad, with the result that, during that period, their ranks are filled with an unusually large proportion of recruits of under 20 years of age, and under one year's service.”



Now, was it tolerable that the country should have entrusted the administration to the War Office, and then be told by this public official that this all important point had not been considered and settled? The House knew hardly what provision was made against this contingency. There was not a single battalion of the Line in England that could be sent on a small expedition. The Adjutant General, in his evidence, explained that if six or eight battalions were suddenly wanted for an expedition they would be taken from Gibraltar and Malta. But when they had left, what would be the plight of Gibraltar and Malta? They would have to be garrisoned by battalions of recruits from this country, battalions that were not fit to do any fighting work, or any work that deserved the name of service. If rumour spoke correctly the garrisons at Gibraltar and at Malta had already been materially weakened, and he thought that was a matter on which the House had not been sufficiently informed, and which he was confident they ought to know. As a makeshift, and in order to equalise the battalions at home with those abroad, several battalions, he thought three, had been sent out to Malta and Gibraltar and treated as if they were in England, that is, as if on Home service. That was to say, these garrisons would be called upon in the trooping season to send drafts to their battalions in India, receiving in place of them two or three hundred perfectly raw recruits from the dépôt, who although they would become admirable soldiers in a few years, were then unfit to take part in garrison service when the conditions were not so healthy as at home. Was it not an unworthy makeshift to pretend to equalise the battalion abroad with those at home by sending battalions which had no business to be sent there, and with men in such battalions who were physically unfit to go to such stations? Another matter in which the War Office had largely failed to make provision against certain contingencies was the question of drafts. The necessities of regiments for drafts could be accurately foreseen; the War Office had materials for knowing what drafts would be wanted, but instead of making provision for supplying these drafts, they had often actually checked recruiting for the very battalions from which drafts were shortly going to be taken.

*Viscount Wolmer*

What did Sir Arthur Haliburton say on the subject? He said—

"As it was known in 1888 that, owing to increases in the Army, and to other exceptional circumstances which occurred in 1883 to 1886, an unusually large number of men would go to the Reserve from certain regiments in the period of 1890 to 1893, and that unusually large drafts would consequently be required from those corps in that period, it was unfortunate that any measures calculated, even temporarily, to reduce the supply of recruits, should have been adopted. In view of the impending exceptional demand for drafts, steps should rather have been taken, either to mitigate the demand or to stimulate recruiting, and the establishments of the battalions concerned should have been temporarily increased above their ordinary strength, so that when the demand for exceptional drafts arose it could have been promptly and satisfactorily met."

He would give another quotation from Sir Arthur Haliburton, who had a happy knack of hitting the weak points of the War Office—

"When a merchant has liabilities maturing at a given date, he takes care to have funds ready to redeem them, and there seems to be no reason why similar foresight should not be observed in meeting the requirements of the Army."

Yes, but the War Office not only took no steps to meet these liabilities, but on more than one occasion they took steps to make these liabilities, when they fell due, more difficult to meet. Sir Arthur Haliburton stated that, with reference to the equalisation of the battalions at home and abroad, the short service system could not be continued as at present administered, and in the Report of the Inspector General of Recruiting for 1892 great stress was laid on this point. The Inspector General said about the preparation of drafts—

"As we are not allowed to exceed the numbers voted by Parliament, the result is that we are obliged to check the recruiting when recruits are most freely offering, and this with the knowledge that we shall want men later on when they are harder to obtain. This disability to recruit forces upon us the obligation to commence the drill season with the battalions at home, depleted by the drafts despatched to complete the battalions abroad to the requisite establishments. To recruit effectively, we ought to recruit at a given rate throughout the year; but to do this we must at one period be permitted to recruit in anticipation of the waste which can be foreseen in the immediate future."

He should have thought it was absolutely elementary that the officers responsible for having drafts ready should be allowed to recruit in anticipation of these liabilities, and to meet any emergency that might arise. The general condition of

affairs in the Home Army produced by maladministration of the War Office had become serious. The point he should endeavour to establish was that the ranks of the Home Army contained a great number of boys, who were paid what were supposed to be men's wages, and that they were wholly useless for the purpose of service at home or abroad. When he said service he meant not ordinary parade, but the work a trained soldier was supposed to do. Although they were of admirable character and would in a few years make good soldiers, he contended that now the country was maintaining tens of thousands of boys, who were receiving men's pay and who were for the purposes for which the Army was supported wholly useless; and if he could show that, he said in the first place it was a great waste of public money to maintain these boys for work they could not perform, and in the second place that proper provision for national defence had not been made. In paragraph 3 of the Wantage Report there were given the opinions of the present Adjutant General, the late Adjutant General, Sir Evelyn Wood, and the Commander-in-Chief, who spoke in strong terms of the condition of the battalions at home. He would quote the words of the present Adjutant General from the evidence that officer gave a year ago. He said—

"At the present moment I may say that we have not a single Infantry battalion effective at home."

And Sir Evelyn Wood said—

"The Home battalion is now only a nursery." And he went on to say that such was the juvenile condition of the Aldershot Division that he did not dare exercise it in service marching order; that was, he did not dare put on their back the weight soldiers were supposed to carry. The remark the Committee made upon this was to the following effect:—

"It is true that, as pointed out by the officers whose evidence is quoted above, it was not contemplated, under the organisation adopted in 1872, that battalions at home should be efficient for active service without being completed from the Army Reserve; but the Committee are in complete accord with them in believing that it was never intended that the Infantry at home should be reduced to the condition described above."

And then the Report went on—

"The Committee feel it their duty to point out clearly that men who are too young to be

sent on even peace service abroad, and who, in the words of the General Officer commanding at Aldershot, 'cannot do a day's service even in England,' ought not to be classed as effective soldiers."

It was objected to that by Sir Arthur Haliburton that statistics proved the contrary, and showed that the battalions at home were, on the whole, in a satisfactory condition; and some other critics had gone on to say that even if they were not in a satisfactory condition it did not matter, because we had the Army Reserve. With all respect to Sir Arthur Haliburton or any other distinguished public servant, or any Member of that House, he thought it was carrying faith in statistics too far, when statistics were to be placed against the opinions of four such competent soldiers as the present and the late Adjutant Generals Sir Evelyn Wood and the Commander-in-Chief. But it was not a question of the opinion of these distinguished officers, or of statistics, but a question of ocular demonstration. Any Member who went down to Aldershot would see battalions of extremely nice-looking boys, but who were totally and absolutely unfit to do a day's hard work in marching order even in England, and the idea of using them in any campaign either in England or abroad was obviously absurd. Now he came to the objection that it did not matter, and that we had the Reserve to fall back upon. But before he came to that he would point out to the House that he had not said one word about what were called the "special" men who were specially enlisted. Some specials were quite as good as many who were not "specials," and even better. But when they had a standard of five feet four inches in height, no doubt any men or boys below that standard were obviously physically weak. It was not, however, only those who were taken "specially," but there were thousands of those who were not taken specially, and who were just up to the standard, who were absolutely unfitted for the work the country expected them to perform. In paragraph 116 of Sir Arthur Haliburton's Report it was stated—

"Officers forget that this ungrateful and unpleasant duty of supply drafts to the sister battalion abroad is an essential element in the existing Army organisation, and that, provided each battalion, when it has done this, preserves

a sufficient cadre on to which to graft its Reserve, it is thoroughly efficient for the most important duties required of it."

He was quite prepared to accept that definition, and he could show that each battalion had not left a sufficient cadre. In paragraph 130 of the Report Sir Arthur Haliburton went on to suppose that all the battalions at home had to be raised to war strength, and said—

"If the whole of the men of less than one year's service were sent to the dépôt 45,110 Reserve men would be required, and this, allowing 10 per cent. for inefficients, exceeds by 2,742 our total First Class Infantry Reserve, including Section D."

And again he said—

"It may become a question of whether the home establishment of the Army will not have to be augmented in order to increase the Reserve."

He thought so too, if the present condition of affairs was allowed to go on. But what did this mean? Did the House grasp the real meaning of this paragraph in the Report? It meant this: that to complete the 65 home battalions, and to bring them up to war strength, the whole of the Infantry Reserve was required; every single man of the First Class Infantry Reserve was required to complete the home battalion to a war establishment, and then there were not enough, for even then nearly 3,000 additional men would be required. What was the meaning of that? It meant the substitution *en bloc* of the Reserve for the men with the Colours, not because the men sent back to the dépôt were men under one year's service. If these men were physically efficient great numbers of them need not be sent to the dépôt, and the reason why—in the opinion of every hon. Member who examined these battalions for himself—all these men had to be sent to the dépôt was not because they had only one year's service or less, but because, as a rule, they were wholly inefficient for military purposes. They were extremely young. Many thousands did not pretend to be more than 18, and great numbers were much less. A very large proportion were only 17, and when the House remembered that the military authorities did not consider a soldier fit to be sent to India until he was 20 years of age they could judge what use for active service this vast number of men would be if they were sent back to the dépôts. For what

did the Reserve exist? The men who comprised the Reserve were intended to be used for two purposes. One was to bring up battalions ordered on active service to their proper strength, after sending back to the dépôt all those not able to go on service; and the other was that the Reserve should be a Reserve in the usually accepted sense of the term, able to supply drafts to those battalions when they were on war service. Now, they found that the condition of the home battalions was such that the whole of the Army Reserve was barely adequate to fulfil only one of the functions for which it existed, and for the purpose of furnishing drafts to battalions on active service there was absolutely nothing left except the same material which was left in the days of the Crimea, that was, young soldiers who were too young to go out on active service. He could not leave this branch of the subject without reminding the House what the present Adjutant General said in his evidence. Sir Redvers Buller said—

"We are deficient 12,050 Reservists to bring two Army Corps up to our establishment to send abroad,"

leaving absolutely no Reservists at all, except the Militia Reserve, for the purpose of supplying drafts in time of war. What was it he asked the House to deduce from these facts? He asked the House to deduce that it was not economical administration to support in the battalions at home this vast number of inefficient boys. In the second place, he asked the House to deduce from them that the present system of recruiting and administration was absolutely destructive of the Reserve: and, in the third place, he said emphatically that these results were not necessarily the results of the short-service system. If the men now in the line battalions at home were really well developed lads of 18 even, there would be no necessity to send such vast numbers of them back to the dépôt. The present lamentable results were due to the maladministration of the recruiting system by the War Office, or were due very largely to that cause, and to their complete want of forethought shown in the matter of drafts. These results were also due to the inadequate terms and conditions of the service that were offered to

recruits. The House were aware that this Wantage Committee recommended that the pay of the Army should be increased. He was not going to argue at the present moment whether the recommendation was right or wrong. He himself held the view most distinctly that to obtain a better size of recruits better terms must be offered, and they must offer at least a clear shilling a day. What he did want to urge was, that the present state of discontent which existed in the Army was a thing for which the War Office must be held responsible. It was proved conclusively in the evidence before the Committee that the majority of the soldiers believed when they enlisted—and believed erroneously—that they were going to get a shilling, or nearly a shilling, a day free from any deduction, and that the conditions of service, and the amount received when they got into the Army, were quite different to what they had been led to expect. It was impossible to acquit the War Office altogether of blame in this matter. The pamphlet which was issued was on the whole clear, but the posters were at that time misleading, and the War Office must be held responsible for what those employed in recruiting told the recruits, and there was no doubt that at the present moment the great bulk of the soldiers in the Army found on enlistment that they had been deceived, and he thought no one would be more ready to admit than the present Secretary for War that means should, if possible, be adopted to put an end to such things. All the stoppages which would be made from the soldier's pay should be clearly explained to the recruit, who should be distinctly told the exact conditions under which he entered the service. There were one or two matters which, although trivial, were of great importance to the private soldier, which he regarded as doing him the greatest personal wrong, and in which—to use his unparliamentary language—he regarded himself as being swindled. He did not wish to put the matter too strongly, but he thought that expression was not very wide of the mark with respect to the points he was about to mention. On enlistment he was told that his kit would be supplied to him free, but in a year or eighteen months he was sent to India, to serve his country and to protect

India, and yet the moment he embarked he was made to pay for the use of clothes on board ship, and in India he was made to pay for special suits of clothes to use in the Indian climate. So that when he went to serve a generous country it was necessary for him to provide himself with different clothing for that purpose, and to pay the expense of it. He (Lord Wolmer) had heard lately that that had been altered, or was about to be altered. He thought, for the honour of the country, it was time it was altered. He himself had conversed with private soldiers who had come back from India, this charge rankling in their minds during the whole time they were there, and until they returned and after it. While on this question he could not leave out of sight the fact which he was glad to learn from the Memorandum issued by the Secretary of State for War, that he was going to deal with the question of corporals and lance corporals. One of the reasons for the recent insubordination was the incapacity of these men; and the reasons why they were incapable was that it was most difficult to get the best men to accept the positions, because on many occasions men who accepted such positions had not only to do the increased and difficult and unpleasant work, but to be put to increased expense, and yet they did not get the pay—they had the rank only—for eighteen months. The country would be grateful to the right hon. Gentleman for undertaking to deal with this matter. The last point to which he would draw attention, in connection with the Committee's Report, was one that made no reflection upon either the present Secretary for War or his Predecessor, but it affected the War Office to a very serious extent, and that was the employment of the men of the Army Reserve. An eminent authority had told them that the Army Reserve system depended upon whether Army Reserve men did or did not get employment. If it once came to general public knowledge that the Army Reserve man, apart from his character, could not get respectable work, then the days of the voluntary enlistment were numbered. The Army Reserve stood between the country and compulsory enlistment, as it was certain that the present system of raising the Army could not continue if the Army Reserve men could not

get employment. They had a clear indication of that in the evidence given before the Committee, and it produced conviction in the minds of the majority of the Committee that respectable men of that class should be provided with employment. He would point out to the House the duty of the Department in this matter. Until the administration of the late Secretary for War this question—upon which the whole of their military system turned, upon which conscription depended—had been completely ignored. This matter until then—a matter which was absolutely vital—had been completely neglected in the past. He was pleased that action had at last been taken. The late Secretary had taken action, and the House would have fresh in its recollection what he did. He made arrangements with the Post Office—and in that he had the co-operation of the late Postmaster General—and secured that these men should have places in the offices; and then he went to the railway companies, with a like result; but the very success of that movement only showed that for 20 years, although a Committee was appointed, the War Office took no action in the matter. He hoped the matter would not be allowed to drop now, but that the right hon. Gentleman the present Secretary for War would carry on the policy put in train by his Predecessor. Why should not the men who had served the country be preferred for offices that they were capable of filling to men who had acted as footmen and valets, or who had waited at the table of a Minister? Was it not possible that they could obtain the help and co-operation of the municipalities—of the County Councils and of the Town Councils—in the same way as the late Secretary for War had obtained the aid of the railway companies? Could they not approach these bodies on the subject? The present Adjutant General referred to the subject in his Report, stating that in his opinion a very serious state of affairs might arise in recruiting service unless the country ensured that soldiers coming off service should get remunerative employment. He had heard indirectly that the present Secretary of State for War had been acting in the matter. He was informed that he been calling for Reports as to how the question stood in Foreign

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Armies. He would respectfully ask the right hon. Gentleman whether these Reports could be laid before the House. He had probably occupied the House at too great length, but he thought he had proved from the evidence brought before the Commission, and from a high official in the War Office, that the War Office was not administering the money entrusted to it by the country for the improvements that were due in the condition of the Army. There was a most extraordinary want of foresight in dealing with drafts in the Home Army; there was the threatened destruction of the Reserve as a result of the policy that was being pursued, and he had shown, he thought, that they should provide for the employment of the Reserve men, as by not discharging this primary duty they ran the risk of which only the good character of the men themselves could save the country from. The men had a genuine grievance as to pay, and then there was the question of stoppages, which demanded the attention of the War Office. He would only make one more appeal to the right hon. Gentleman, and that was upon a subject upon which every non-commissioned officer and private felt most acutely, and which should be mentioned as a blot upon the national character. There were still places where the soldier's uniform was not only regarded as an object for insult, but where the soldier himself was treated with insult. There were places where a soldier was still refused admission. He was refused admission into some theatres, and into other places of public resort. He would say nothing of ill-behaved men, but he thought it would be conceded that a soldier had as much right to go into any of these places as had any civilian, as long as he conducted himself and behaved in a respectable manner. The conduct of those who were responsible for these refusals was an insult to the uniform of the Queen, which was the uniform of the nation. Such an insult was passed when the soldier was turned out of a public-house, or out of a hall, or any place of the sort. On this subject he appealed to the right hon. Gentleman, who was the guardian of the interests of the private soldier, and he thought the War Office should take this subject up as an insult to the nation.

It might be said the right hon. Gentleman had no power, but he appealed to him to make it a cardinal feature of the policy of the War Office to guard the honour of the Army, and to take up every case of this kind. If he did this, this conduct would cease, these insults would cease, and the honour of the nation would be preserved.

GENERAL SIR G. CHESNEY (Oxford) said, the noble Lord, in the Motion which he has brought before the House, has drawn attention to defects in our military system of the most serious kind, and, I venture to think, has in his speech brought out very forcibly the necessity for introducing reforms into the administration under which such an unsatisfactory result should be possible. Sir, the Resolution moved by the noble Lord, to which the House is asked to subscribe, is to the effect that the present system of military administration fails to secure either due economy in peace or efficiency for national defence. In the remarks which, with the indulgence of House, I shall submit to it in support of that Motion, I will endeavour to make good both these propositions. The facts which I shall adduce in support of them are not new ones. The House and the country have already had repeated warnings that the military administration is in a state of inefficiency, at once dangerous and extravagant—warnings proceeding from high and indisputable authority. To go back no further than the year 1887, in that year the strong Commission, presided over by Sir Fitz-James Stephen, made a Report on the system of ordnance administration, which is a scathing exposure of mismanagement in that most important branch of the Service, and generally of the War Office administration. In the following year, in 1888, a still more authoritative Commission, presided over by the Marquess of Hartington, and comprising the late Mr. Smith, the present Secretary for War, the noble Lord the Member for South Paddington, the hon. Baronet the Member for Kingston, and other persons of standing and experience, was appointed to inquire into the still larger question of the whole system of our military administration; and their Report, presented in the following year, constituted a still graver indictment of our military system. It is true that the Commission was not

quite unanimous in the constructive part of their Report; that is, in their recommendations as to the particular organisation to replace that which they found existing. Even in this respect, however, the differences of opinion among the Members arose only on details—important details no doubt, but, still, only details. At any rate, they were unanimous in their judgment that, whatever might be the best remedy to apply, the present state of things was radically vicious and defective and constituted a grave danger to the country, calling for immediate remedy, and, if we consider that the Commission comprised three former Secretaries of State for War, that they were thus in a measure sitting in judgment on themselves as well as on their successor in the office, my right hon. Friend the late Secretary of State for War. Anyone reading between the lines of their Report, and bearing in mind also that in some respects they were treading on delicate ground—anyone reading the Report by these lights must come to the conclusion that it was an unqualified and alarming denunciation of our military system. And yet from this—the most important State Paper in connection with the military affairs of our country which has ever appeared—absolutely nothing resulted. There was a desultory Debate in this House on the subject, as to which it may be said that the attention of the House was diverted to insignificant side issues, and the subject was allowed to drop. None of the reforms proposed by the Commission have been carried out, nor has any appreciable effort been made to act upon them, while one of the measures which was in course of being carried out while the Commission was sitting, and to which they particularly objected, has been persisted in, with the result that things have gone from bad to worse. Such being the result of an inquiry conducted by the highest authorities with its vivid exposure of our defects and differences, one may well almost despair of arousing the House and the country to interest themselves about the matter. Nothing, indeed, in this connection is more striking than the contrast exhibited between the interest which the people of all Continental countries take about their military affairs and the intimate knowledge they possess of them, and the indifference on the sub-

ject displayed by almost all classes in this country. The reason for this remarkable contrast is not far to seek. The Frenchman or the German knows that the very existence of his country depends on the efficiency of his Army, while his liability to military service must naturally give him a very close and lively interest in all the conditions of military life. We in our island home are, happily, not in the same critical state; but surely our circumstances do not justify our total inattention and indifference to these things. If we are not liable to sudden invasion on our own shores, still we have enormous interests all over the globe which we may be called upon to defend at any moment, while our whole trade and prosperity rest on a complex and artificial basis such as has never been found before in any country in the world. We have had abundant warnings that, in these days, the outbreak of war may be sudden and its issue tremendous, and, if our Army is a small one compared with the colossal Armies of Continental nations, surely that is all the more reason why its organisation should be as efficient as it can be made. And, apart from any question of danger, surely we are not justified in neglecting considerations of economy. While professing as we do to be a practical, businesslike people, the great comparative costliness of our Army is surely a reason why we should insist on getting full value for our money, as we certainly do not at present. But one reason for the apathy of the House and the public on this subject is, no doubt, the complacency with which the responsible heads of our Military Administration, and the Government generally, are accustomed to display when these grave charges are brought against them. The country feels that it pays handsomely for its Army, doing so under the belief—not an irrational belief—that the sums which it so generously grants shall be applied to the best advantage; and if it sees that those who are responsible for the management of our military affairs make light of these complaints and warnings, it not unnaturally assumes that these are over-charged. Surely, it may say, things cannot be so bad as they are represented to be, or successive and responsible Ministers would not be satisfied with such a state of things, but would set about reforming them. But yet Ministers

have no right to be satisfied, or to rest complacently with folded hands. Not that I would be understood to imply that no reforms have been carried out. The Army has not been standing still, although its progress towards efficiency has not kept pace with that of other nations, and I am very far from wishing to undervalue the useful work in many directions which has been accomplished by successive Secretaries of State, and especially by my right hon. Friend at the head of the War Department of the late Government; but, in fact, isolated measures here and there are quite insufficient to meet the case; the system of War Office administration is, and always has been, radically faulty in principle, and can never work properly until based on the sound principles which govern the conduct of the administration of every other Army in the world. And instead of any improvement having been achieved in this the first essential respect, things have been going from bad to worse, as Lord Hartington's Commission point out. The responsibility for the present state of things can be charged on neither Party. This is in no sense a Party question, each Party has succeeded to the charge of a system inherently faulty from the first; and looking to the practical side of political life, to the stress and strain of office, and how particular views for the future are constantly obscured by the present needs which arise to be dealt with from day to day; considering the frequent changes in the tenure of the high posts; considering also the greater attractions which other posts in the Government offer to the ablest men in each Party, it is not surprising that no man of genius should have been found at the War Office with discernment to grasp clearly the necessities for reform, and with firmness of character and strength of will to enforce and carry out his conception. However that may be, a state of things has come about which, as I shall endeavour to show, calls for the most serious attention of this House and the country. The truth is, as I have said, that a false start was made at the outset—by the outset. I mean the time after the Crimean War, when the War Department was first created. Up to that time there had been no War Department,

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and the first necessary step in the creation of one central responsible authority for Army administration was obviously the abolition of the separate Ordnance Department, which had not only charge of ordnance matters, but also the command of the regiments of Artillery and Engineers, and to place all that business as well as the Commander-in-Chief and the whole administration of the Army under the Secretary of State. It was a necessary and a primary condition of the case that the Secretary of State should be made the supreme and responsible head of the Army; but when establishing that supreme responsibility, the fatal mistake was made of abolishing the responsibility of the heads of all the different Departments of the Army for their respective duties. The heads of these Departments—the Ordnance, Transport, Fortifications, and so forth—were retained, and retained their high-sounding titles; but they were divested of all responsibility; they were transformed into mere office subordinates of the Secretary of State, and have so continued ever since; and to this radical mistake—to this blindness of perception of the essential principles of administration, and the excessive centralisation of authority much—indeed, almost all—of the subsequent confusion and maladministration at the War Office is due. Now, I would venture to lay down this axiom: that sound administration is essentially based on maintaining a recognised chain of responsibility throughout all grades of the Service, accompanied by a corresponding devolution of authority. For example, take a great Railway Company. The possibility of its working at all as an effective machine depends on the large devolution of authority to each of the heads of the departments and making them responsible for the business of their respective departments. What would be thought of the management of a Railway Company in which every matter of business, down to the most detailed item, was carried out in the name of the Chairman and Board of Directors? in which the heads of the departments—the locomotive department, the traffic department, or any other—never ventured to issue an order in his own name, and professed to be merely a subordinate conveying the

orders of the Chairman and the Board? Yet this is precisely what has been from the first the system established by the Secretary of State; the responsibility of everybody else has been merged in that of the Secretary of State, who becomes nominally responsible for everything and is virtually responsible for nothing. Every head of a Department at the War Office issues every order in the name of the Secretary of State, and under his authority; whether a thing is done by his own advice or without it never appears in the record; to all intents and purposes he is merely a clerk with a high-sounding title, acting under the direct orders and inspiration of his superior. And to further accentuate this, every Departmental Authority outside the War Office, whether in the Transport, Ordnance, or any other branch, does not address the head of his Department at the War Office, but the Under Secretary of State, to whom he applies for the orders of the Secretary of State upon every case down to the most minute and trifling details. And if such be the overgrown centralisation within the War Office, the condition of impotence to which the Departments outside that office is reduced is more monstrous still. There are highly-paid officials all over the country and all over the world serving under the War Office Department, but the whole business of the Army is gathered up, and centralised in, the War Office itself. No one outside the War Office has any authority whatever. Here you have at once a sufficient explanation of the overgrown office establishments to be found within that building. A further mistake made at the outset was the abolition of official correspondence within the office. This may, perhaps, seem a small matter, but it is really one of far-reaching consequence. The intention was well meant—to reduce correspondence; but it has been the cause and source, in reality, of much of the confusion, delay, and waste of time which now takes place, and of the destruction of any sense of responsibility on the part of those concerned, which the rest of the system might have left them. When any matter has to be taken in hand, a Minute Paper, as it is called, is set going, and every official concerned is invited to record his opinion on it. Each man writes something or other on the Paper, and passes it



on to some other official, and so the ball thus set rolling may go on rolling round and round the Department indefinitely, till at last such a mass of correspondence is collected that when it reaches the Secretary of State it is often difficult to determine what is the issue involved and whose opinion it is that is to be taken, and what it is on which an Order has to be passed. An incidental point in the matter is that there is nothing to prevent any one person keeping this Minute Paper as long as he likes, and the Minute Paper may be mislaid for weeks or months—it is no one's particular business to pursue its course or to bring it to a conclusion. I need hardly say, also, that it offers a facile temptation to procrastination, because, if there is any doubt as to what it means, there is nothing easier than to set it in circulation again with fresh opinions. Ultimately, if the case gets as far as the Secretary of State, he initials it, and becomes responsible for the Order, but how and by whose advice he passes it there is only this mass of undigested notes to show. I have now to mention what has been the most disastrous measure of all. In every other Army a broad distinction is drawn between the command of the troops and the supply of their equipment. By equipment I mean everything connected with the troops apart from their drill and discipline; that is, their clothing, arms, food, housing, and also their pay—the finance and accounts of the Army. All these services would together make up what is technically styled “supply,” and in every Army in the world which deserves the name (except in our own) the conduct of these two branches of Army administration—command and supply—is kept absolutely distinct. The command and discipline of troops is quite sufficient to occupy the energies of the best man available. But those who are concerned with the command have nothing to do with the provision and equipment, or supply, or with the disbursement of money. Supply is kept absolutely distinct, and requires its special staff of administrators. The disastrous mistake I have referred to was this: that this broad distinction has been lost sight of. Two or three years ago the Department of Supply was swept away, the office of the Surveyor General of the Ordnance was abolished, and

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the duties which had been dealt with in his branch were distributed throughout the War Department. And as part of this re-organisation, as it was called, came the most lamentable change of all, whereby the nominal charge of the supply of the Army, which hitherto had been placed under what might be called a non-military branch of the War Office, was placed under the Commander-in-Chief and the Adjutant General. The idea which prompted this curious, not to say ridiculous, arrangement was no doubt a specious one—that military men should look after military business. Yes, but which military men? The discipline of the Army, including in the Army all that involves its preparation for war and its higher training, is amply sufficient in every Army to engage the undivided energies of the ablest soldiers to be found. As it is now, the Commander-in-Chief is not only responsible for the discipline and efficiency of the Army in the accepted sense, he has also become nominally responsible for everything connected with equipment—the Ordnance Factories and the clothing alone excepted—for all equipment, including buildings, fortifications, commissariat, transport, and everything connected with Army supply. Down to the very smallest details, everything is now done in the name of the Commander-in-Chief and under his direct orders, passing through the Adjutant General, to whom all other heads of the Departments are made subordinate. This is the state of things Lord Hartington's Commission found just established. They said in paragraph 60 of their Report—

“In the first place, it appears to us to involve an excessive centralisation of responsibility in the person of the Commander-in-Chief, on whom the whole executive command, administration, and supply of the Army now devolve. He is, in fact, the only officer who has any direct responsibility to the Secretary of State.”

In paragraph 61 they said—

“We believe that such a centralisation of power and responsibility in the office of the Commander-in-Chief must necessarily tend to weaken the sense of responsibility of the other heads of Departments, and thus to diminish their efficiency.”

Then in paragraph 73, they said—

“Further changes are, however, in our opinion, required in the administration of the War Office. We consider that a definite and direct responsibility to the Secretary of State should be placed upon the heads

of Departments for their several administration, as is the case with the Naval Lords at the Admiralty. Under the present system, as we have pointed out (paragraph 57), the only real responsibility appears to rest on the Commander-in-Chief, who alone would be accountable to the Secretary of State, even for such a matter as the defective design of a Navy gun. We do not find that this centralisation of responsibility exists in the administration of the Armies of any other great Powers of Europe, and we consider that it cannot conduce to efficiency. The professional officers administering Departments at the War Office should therefore be made directly responsible to the Secretary of State for the efficiency of those Departments and for the economical expenditure of the sums annually allotted to them.

The Commission might have added that, apart from such a system being fatal to responsibilities, there is this further result: the loss of all effective criticism, upon the effective working of this Department. If the troops are ill-found, or ill-fed, or ill-armed, or ill-housed, it is to the Commander-in-Chief as safeguarding the interests of the troops, that the Secretary of State should look to have the evils brought to light. But now the Commander-in-Chief has become directly responsible himself for everything in this respect. You will find that down to the smallest point of detail, the number of bricks in the thickness of a barrack wall, the number of spokes in the wheel of a waggon—in everything, no matter how insignificant, the order is said to be that of His Royal Highness. Now, I should explain this. This distinction, which is so absolutely essential, and was always insisted on by the Duke of Wellington, was until lately observed in the administration of our own Army. Under Lord Northbrook's Committee of 1870 the War Office was divided into a Military Department, a Supply Department, and a Finance Department. The Committee recommended that of the three branches, one should be personally under the Commander-in-Chief, who should command the troops; another under a new officer, who was to be called a Surveyor General of Ordnance, and the third under a finance official. That recommendation was carried out; but a few years later the original scheme was departed from, and the office of Surveyor General became a Parliamentary one, and some younger Member of the Ministry was appointed to it. The idea was that in this way the Secretary of State should be assisted in his

official duties, but clearly there was a misconception in that, because, if you are to maintain the responsibility of the Secretary of State to Parliament, you cannot have a subordinate officer under him who is also responsible to Parliament. The evidence given before successive Commissions has shown that the position of the Surveyor General of the Ordnance was really that of an irresponsible subordinate. The Surveyors General of the Ordnance appointed were Sir H. Storks, from 1870 to 1874; Lord Eustace Cecil, from 1874 to 1880; Sir John Adye, from 1880 to 1882. Afterwards a succession of Parliamentary officials with no special experience were appointed—together seven persons in 16 years—only two possessing “the qualifications which were in the mind of those who originally established the office.” The whole purport of the Report is that the Secretary of State's nominal responsibility for everything becomes a mere matter of form, from his having no strong professional advisers on technical matters. And this position is weakened rather than strengthened by the position of Surveyor General, who is, by his own admission, the mere Parliamentary exponent of his Department on matters relating to the Ordnance, on which he does not profess to have opinions of his own. The remedy proposed by Sir J. FitzJames Stephen's Commission was the re-creation of a Master General of Ordnance altogether separate from the Secretary of State. Opinions may be given for or against that proposal, but the facts incontestably established that there is an entire want of responsibility, and that the administration of the War Department as regards supply needed to be strengthened. It is a grotesque commentary on the case that the ink with which the Report was written was hardly dry when what little remained of the Department of the Surveyor General, which was already greatly attenuated, was abolished, and all the Departments of Supply were placed under the Commander-in-Chief. No doubt the intention was a good one. It was thought that “he who drives fat oxen should himself be fat.” No doubt the Secretary of State had in view the fact that Secretaries of State succeed each other very quickly to office, and that by placing these duties

on the Commander-in-Chief there would be greater continuity and permanence in the work than there was before. The result was that another sham was introduced. You now have the Secretary of State and the Commander-in-Chief responsible for everything. Dealing with the position of the Surveyor General as a Parliamentary official, the Report of Sir J. FitzJames Stephen's Commission, in paragraph 53, said—

"It appears from this that as matters stand at present, the Surveyor General of the Ordnance not only cannot advise the Secretary of State, as it was intended he should do, but is himself in the hands of his own subordinates, at least as much as the Secretary of State. The inherent weakness of the position of the Secretary of State is increased by the inherent weakness of his principal subordinate, the Surveyor General of the Ordnance. It is, indeed, surprising that worse results have not ensued from so very weak an organisation."

In evidence before Lord Hartington's Commission the Surveyor General said that he was merely a superior clerk. Sir J. FitzJames Stephen's Commission, in their Summary and Conclusions, paragraphs 192 and 509, said—

"The great defects of the existing system are three: First, it has no definite object; secondly, it has no efficient head; thirdly, it has no properly, organised method of dealing with technical questions which arise as to the construction or purchase of warlike stores. In other words, it requires more system, more publicity, more vigour in administration, and more special knowledge in Council.

509. The general results of our inquiry are as follows:—

We think that the system on which patterns of warlike stores are procured and passed into Your Majesty's Service is defective in the following particulars:—

- (a.) That the powers of the Secretary of State are so great that no single person can be expected to exercise them efficiently, especially when regard is had to the uncertainty of his tenure of office, and his presumable deficiency in special knowledge.
- (b.) The same observations apply in a less degree to the Surveyor General of the Ordnance.
- (c.) The Secretary of State and the Surveyor General of the Ordnance are practically in the hands of their subordinates, and this destroys all real responsibility and all effective superintendence.
- (d.) The present system is directed to no definite object; it is regulated by no definite rules; it makes no regular stated provision either for the proper supply and manufacture of warlike stores, or for enforcing the responsibility of those

who fail to make them properly, or for ascertaining the fact that they are made improperly. It is to these defects in the system that we attribute most of the matters complained of."

This, then, is the system: the Secretary of State responsible not for keeping others to their work, but nominally from doing it. Real and effective responsibility is to be found nowhere. Add to this a most cumbersome method of correspondence of a piece with everything else and successive centralisation of all authority within the War Office, and you have a state of things unexampled in this country or in any country. It is, in truth, "confusion worse confounded." It is bad enough in peace time, in which the thing hardly gets along. The public hears of delays, for example, in the supply of guns, of rifles, and munition, and they are told when they inquire about the thing that it is due to the difficulty of coming to a decision and the complex nature of the problems involved. It is really due to the total want of any specific responsibility on the part of any one person for the proper conduct of business; and if the machine hardly works in peace time, in case of war a breakdown is inevitable. Now, to turn to the way in which an Army ought to be administered. I might refer to the German Army or to the French Army or to the Austrian Army, for in all the principle is the same. I would take the case of the Indian Army, if the House will bear with me for a few minutes longer, and will endeavour to place before it as briefly as I can the system pursued there. It is just the same in principle with that of any Continental Army. It is not claimed for the Indian Army administration that it is the work of any genius, it has, in fact, grown out of necessity. The Indian Army has to be kept in a state of constant readiness for war; the Indian Military Administration is constantly practised in the business of conducting campaigns and expeditions, and it is obliged, therefore, to have a system which will work, and which does work, in perfect efficiency. Sometimes a General in command of a force may prove unequal to his position, and the policy which has governed military operations may no doubt be open to question, but the machine always works with perfect success and without any friction; and

General Sir G. Chesney

that system was established from the first on a sound principle, and has been so maintained. In the first place, a distinction between the command of the Army and the supply has always been maintained; the Commander-in-Chief and the Staff under him have nothing to do with equipment or finance or disbursement of money; secondly, every head of the Department of Supply is specifically responsible for the business of his own Department. The head of the whole business is the Military Department of the Government of India, which corresponds to the War Office Department in this country. The Commander-in-Chief is a member of the Viceroy's Council, which is just as if the Commander-in-Chief at home were a member of the Cabinet, but *qua* Commander-in-Chief, he is under the Military Department, and his office is a branch of it. The heads of the Ordnance, Commissariat, and Clothing Departments, with some minor heads, as the Remount, form also branches of it; the Departments of Pay, Finance, and Accounts form another branch. The next step is that responsibility is established throughout by correspondence being conducted by official and formal letters. There is, of course, the usual interchange of Minutes and of personal opinions, but business begins and ends in each case with an official letter. There is the letter of the person or authority who makes the proposal; there is the final letter of the Government of India passing orders upon it, and plainly showing whether the proposal is approved or disapproved or modified; and if the recommendations of the recommending officer are set aside, the reasons are recorded, and responsibility can always be traced to the right source. I will just observe by the way that this system of rigid official correspondence has arisen possibly, to a certain extent, through accident; that is to say, the Indian Government is under an obligation to report all its proceedings to the Secretary of State in London, and this involves the necessity of their business being conducted in this way. The supplementary Minutes which form the basis of the orders passed are confidential, but the official correspondence containing authoritative statements goes on from first to last. To this happy accident—if it can be so called—may be ascribed the success of the system, in that responsi-

bility throughout is perfectly recognised and acted upon. If, for example, the troops should be supplied with indifferent provisions on a campaign, or if the ammunition should run short—though I cannot recollect any case of its ever having done so—it is always possible to ascertain who is to blame, by whom the stores were supplied, or whether the Government itself has interfered with the action of the Commissariat offices. So with regard to the ammunition—whether the scale supplied has been that by the Commander-in-Chief or has been curtailed. But in the system carried on by the War Office—if such it can be called—if some gentleman forgets to pack the medicines, or the ammunition is put at the bottom of the transport under the reserve stock of hay, in all probability it will be found that this is the outcome of some voluminous Minute Paper, which has been handed about in the office, and to which the Secretary of State has eventually put his own initials. Now, it is not to be supposed from this that the Commander-in-Chief in India has nothing to say to supply. He has the first say in everything practically; every proposal for altering the equipment is initiated by him. It may be the outcome of discussion in the Viceroy's Council, or in any other way; but the proposal always takes the form of an official letter from the Adjutant General to the Military Department, recommending the change. It is then referred to the head of the Department of Supply, Ordnance, or Commissariat, or whoever it may be, for his opinion; and after that discussion comes the final order of the Government, either approving or disapproving, or modifying, as the case may be. So in the still more important case of an Expedition. If an Expedition or Campaign is determined upon, the Commander-in-Chief is formally requested to form a proposal for carrying it out. This is done in an official letter, setting out the troops he would recommend to employ, the scale of ammunition, clothing, and everything else connected with the Expedition. This is then formally approved in an official letter from the Government, making such modifications as may be thought necessary. There may be, of course, any amount of personal discussion upon this, but the final document is the official order of the War Department of the Government,

for which they are responsible. Then a copy of this order is communicated officially to all the Heads of the Department, and they issue this order in their own name, and are responsible for the necessary detailed orders to their respective Departments for carrying out the same. It will be observed, therefore, that the Commander-in-Chief is virtually the author and source of all military measures. It is he who, besides commanding the troops, really controls their armament, their equipment in all respects, their housing, and, in fact, every arrangement connected with them. No building connected with the troops is put in execution until it has been formally approved by him, or, if disapproved without the reasons for over-riding his opinion being officially recorded, and it may be said without exaggeration that the Commander-in-Chief has much greater influence and authority than the Commander-in-Chief at home. But I need hardly point out the essential difference between the two ways of doing business—between the Commander-in-Chief recommending that a gun or a transport waggon or a barrack should be of a particular pattern, and the execution of the order being committed to the trained head of the Department concerned, to be carried out under his responsibility, and the system which obtains here, under which the Commander-in-Chief is supposed to be a responsible executive authority for carrying out himself all these works in all their details. I would further invite the attention of the House to this important point: that in India the Commander-in-Chief is the potent critic if anything goes wrong. Suppose that in peace time the troops are badly clothed, or badly housed, it is from the Commander-in-Chief that the Government first hears of it, and then the departmental officers concerned are put on their defence to explain or account for the defect. So on a campaign; if provisions or equipment are faulty, it is the Commander-in-Chief who, getting the report from the officers of the staff, brings the matter to light, and it is this form of criticism—which the House may be sure is very freely and very fully exercised—which constitutes the most effective check against any departmental inefficiency. But here at home this form of criticism is absolutely non-existent, be-

cause, under the ridiculous system that obtains at home, the Commander-in-Chief and Adjutant General have made themselves responsible for all these Executive details. I will not dwell here on the vigour and the promptitude which this method of procedure admits of. As an illustration, I will merely say that just before I left India the Government had just carried out three important Expeditions simultaneously—an Expedition to the Black Mountains and the North-West Frontier; an Expedition to put down a sudden rising of the troops in the Meranzai country further south; and the Expedition to suppress the revolt at Manipur. There were thus three considerable military operations going on simultaneously, and between 30,000 and 40,000 men had to be set in motion with all their supply and transport, and in each case over a most difficult and inhospitable country. Yet under the system there obtaining, of establishing the responsibility of the heads of the Services concerned and giving them—as to a certain extent has been given—wide devolution of authority, I do not hesitate to say that business, as far as regards the mere military details, gave the Government of India less trouble and correspondence than will be found to take place here in order to carry out a review in Hyde Park. As for attempting to carry on a war under the present system, it is difficult to conceive of the state of confusion and the delays and waste of money which must arise if the breaking out of war should come on us before we have set our military house in order. And assuredly it cannot lead to economy in peace. Where there is no specific responsibility there must be waste. For instance: The War Office Department, including the Pay Department, consists of something like 1,300 superior officers and clerks, and costs, I think, very nearly £300,000 a year, and audit has to be done all over again by the Treasury. And yet this does not lead to any effective control over the combatant branch. First, as an illustration of economical management, I may refer to the very efficient Military Body known as the Punjaub Frontier Force. It is, in effect, a small Army of itself, consisting of 15 regiments of Cavalry and Infantry, and 4 batteries of Artillery. It com-

prises altogether about 14,000 men, and is posted along the North West Frontier of India over something like 500 miles of ground. This force is, and has been for the last 40 years, commanded by a Colonel, with the temporary rank of Brigadier General, and one Staff officer. There are no departmental officers at all—Commissariat, Transport, or any other. The regiments keep their own transport; the combatant officers pay the men; the whole business is conducted in this way, and its efficiency has been proved indisputably by 40 years of warfare. It will be said that this is entirely a force of native troops. Well, I will turn to the Lahore district of the Bengal Army. This has altogether about 16,000 men, and is commanded by a major-general, with one aide-de-camp and two executive Staff officers. In the Umballa district there are 6,200 men, mainly British troops; also a colonel and two Staff officers. For the Aldershot division there are seven generals, including the principal medical officer and seven aides-de-camp. But no one will take exception to the Aldershot division in particular, as it is the one practical place for soldiering in the United Kingdom. If we turn to our colonial stations we find a truly surprising state of things. For example, at the Cape there are a garrison battery of Artillery, a detachment of Horse Artillery, one company of Royal Engineers, and one and a-half detachments of Infantry. To command this enormous force there is provided a lieutenant general, an assistant military secretary, an aide-de-camp, two Staff officers, or a total staff of five officers. At Cyprus there is a major general, a Staff officer to command four companies of Infantry. At the Mauritius there are one company of Royal Artillery, two companies of Asiatic Artillery—whatever that may be—a detachment of Royal Engineers, and again four companies of Infantry. For this force there is a colonel on the Staff with the rank of major general, and of course a Staff officer. In Jamaica there are one company of Garrison Artillery, one and a-half companies of Engineers (African), three companies of British Infantry, and six companies of a West India regiment, to command which there are a colonel on the Staff, with rank of major general and a Staff officer. Barbadoes

has pretty much the same strength of garrison and the same Staff. Again, I would say, compare this with what is found necessary in India. Take, for example, Sealkot, where there are a regiment of British Infantry, a regiment of British Dragoons, a regiment of Native Cavalry, two regiments of Native Infantry, and two brigades of Artillery. The whole form a strong brigade, a force of far more than the strength of six of these wretched little detachments put together, commanded by a colonel, with a Staff officer called a station officer, and no aide-de-camp. Well, Sir, no one would object to these little colonial commands if they formed useful training for higher posts, but it is obvious that they are nothing of the kind. Four companies of Infantry do not make a garrison fit for more than a major to command, leave alone a general officer. There is absolutely nothing military about the position from a military point of view. These major generals are, from a military point of view, simply rotting, and it is not too much to say that a man who has held one of these commands for five years becomes absolutely unfitted for any higher employment. And yet while money is wasted in this way, camps of instructions—the very life and soul of the Army—are year after year refused for want of money, and there is no range provided in England, except at Dartmoor, where you can fire off a field gun. I could pursue these details right through the items. To take the Engineers for example: A colonel of Engineers at Exeter doing duty which could be quite as well done—much better done—by a subaltern. The same at Brighton, where there is absolutely nothing to do. Let the traveller go to Kurrachee, for example. He will find there fortifications being carried out on a large scale and of a new type, the whole under the exclusive management of a captain of Engineers. At Bombay he finds a very large fortress in course of construction and nearly approaching to completion, the responsible officer at the head being a major of Engineers. He goes to Aden, where there has just been finished what is, in a military point of view, an admirable fortress, with works admirably carried out under the direction of a captain of Engineers. He arrives

at Portsmouth to find three colonels of Engineers, although there is nothing going on of any importance. Well, Sir, if these eccentricities are to be met with in broad daylight, so to speak, I think the House will draw the necessary conclusion that there is also room for economy in every branch of the Estimates, especially in that overgrown rabbit warren—the War Office itself. I submit that the case which has been put before the House, that the present system does not conduce to economy in peace time, has been sufficiently established. I have endeavoured to put the case as simply as possible; No heroic action is necessary. The House is merely called on to record an opinion, which will, however, undoubtedly strengthen the hands of the Minister of War, and have a most potent effect. What is needed is a return to sound principles, to a proper distribution of duties till lately recognised, but latterly lost sight of, and the introduction of rational method of procedure which should establish responsibility through every branch of the Department. The first thing to be done, in my opinion, is to remove from the Commander-in-Chief the heterogeneous duties now cast upon him. Looking at the fact that the Secretary of State is frequently changed, and that, as a rule, he has not on entering office special experience, there should be a permanent head of the Department of Supply, and the office of Surveyor-General, or something akin to it, should be re-created, charged with control of all branches of it. And this office should not be Parliamentary. The effect of its being made Parliamentary, in the first place, weakens the position of the Secretary of State, who is and must be responsible for everything; secondly, the duty is too important to be dealt with by a junior Member of a Government. Lastly, there should be a strong financial department, and the Financial Secretary should not be in Parliament for the reasons I have given in the case of the permanent head of supply. Parliamentary aid to the Secretary of State can be obtained by the appointment of an additional Under Secretary. The system of correspondence should be reformed. The Secretary of State and three chief officials—namely, the Commander-in-Chief, the

head of supply branch, and the Financial Secretary, should form a Council, and their proceedings should be formal, and, if necessary, available in case of any public inquiry. A greater degree of publicity should be given to their proceedings; for example, each head of a Department should make an Annual Report, to be laid before Parliament. This would strengthen the position of Secretary of State. There need be no fear of permanent officials over-asserting themselves, and the fear entertained of publicity, to my mind, is unfounded. I consider there is great value to be attached to publicity. It creates increased interest in what is done, and has a tendency to prevent rash charges. I have now put my case before the House. I have drawn attention to the grave disclosures already published, and I have submitted to the House my views of the causes of these defects, and the nature of the remedy to be applied. The House is not asked to apply an heroic remedy or to undertake any great inquiry, but only to express an opinion, which, in my view, will be most effective. I would appeal to hon. Members, as men of business and as custodians of the Public Purse and Representatives of the taxpayer, to put a stop to a system, perforce, in the last degree wasteful and extravagant. A system such as I have described is bound to be productive of waste and extravagance in peace time. And it has to be remembered that while an Army is maintained for war, peace is happily the normal condition of the country, and surely it is in the strongest degree incumbent on us to require that the Army shall be administered with due regard to economy, and on common-sense, business-like lines. As to the still more weighty consideration, whether the present state of things can possibly supply an adequate system of defence, such a handling of the military resources of the country as will secure that they shall be applied to the best advantage in the event of any great emergency—speaking with the experience of a long life spent in the Public Service and having had unusual opportunities of practical acquaintance with this particular branch of it, and speaking with a full sense of the responsibility involved—I desire to express my opinion that the present state of our military administra-

tion is full of danger to the country. I do not mean to imply that I fear such an overthrow as has befallen France and Germany. From a catastrophe of that sort our Fleet will save us. But we have to remember that we are guardians of an Empire and a commerce which are the admiration and the envy of the world, and which are vulnerable at every point. And what I do think is to be feared is that if, with our Army administration in its present elastic condition, we should be drawn into a war we should sustain a blow and loss of credit due to our reckless indifference, it might require great efforts to recover. We should win, though, in time, no doubt. The courage and stubbornness of the race would pull us through in the long run, but only at a grievous cost in blood and treasure, wasted from reckless want of foresight. I would therefore very respectfully, but very earnestly, urge upon the House to take the first step towards putting an end to this extravagant, this discreditable, this dangerous state of things, by adopting the Resolution which has now been submitted to it.

#### Amendment proposed,

To leave out from the word "That," to the end of the Question, in order to add the words "in the opinion of this House, the present system of Military administration fails to secure either due economy in time of peace or efficiency for National defence,"—(*Viscount Wolmer*),—instead thereof.

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question."

\*MR. COCHRANE (Ayrshire, N.) said, he claimed the indulgence which the House always extended to a new Member making his maiden speech, and promised to trespass on its attention only for a short time. He thought the attention of the country should be fixed on the condition of the Army, as shown by Lord Wantage's Report, the Report of the Inspector General of Recruiting, and also by the Army Estimates. He thought that Lord Wantage's Report showed a most serious state of affairs existing in the Army, which could not be too often brought under the notice of the country. That Report showed that there were not sufficient recruits obtainable; that the recruits which were obtained were not of a sufficiently good quality to maintain the

Home Army in a proper state of efficiency; and that the Home Army was really only a mere nursery and recruiting dépôt for the Army in India. The Report of Lord Wantage's Committee pointed out that this state of affairs was mainly due to the fact that the inducements offered to young men to enter the Army were not sufficient to supply soldiers to keep the battalions at home up to the proper standard of efficiency, and at the same time provide the necessary drafts for the Army in India. There was a deficiency of 1,400 men during the recruiting season, and were it not for the special measures and makeshifts adopted that deficiency would have amounted to 3,200. It was a very serious thing to think that makeshifts should have to be resorted to from time to time in order to maintain the Indian Army in a state to discharge its duties in time of peace, and he was afraid that if other conditions prevailed there would arise a drain, which the Army at home would not be able to supply. The evidence given by His Royal Highness the Commander-in-Chief was very important. As an officer in the Army, who had the honour of being inspected by the Commander-in-Chief, he could bear testimony to the searching character of the inspections made by His Royal Highness, and to the fact that His Royal Highness was not sparing in his terms of censure of the neglect of any officer. For these reasons he thought the evidence of the Commander-in-Chief was deserving of great weight, when he stated that the Army at home was inefficient, and that not one of the battalions was in a proper state to take the field without being reinforced by the Reserves. The Adjutant General declared that not one single Infantry battalion was efficient at home, and the Commander at Aldershot, who had unrivalled opportunities to judge of the condition of the Army, said that the home battalions were only a nursery for the Army in India, and that the soldiers were not fit to go through even the ordinary fatigue of the field-day. The Commander of the Forces in Ireland stated that when the drafts for India had been provided the home battalions were like a lemon out of which the juice had been squeezed. The only exception to these descriptions was the Guards. As one who had had the honour of serving for a few years in the Guards, he could, in



every way, endorse what had been said about these regiments; their drill, their general efficiency, and their fitness for the discharge of any duty they might be called upon to perform. The Report of Lord Wantage's Committee said that the only alternative, apparently, to some great expenditure, in order to increase the efficiency of the Army, was conscription. "Conscription" was a word very few of them would venture to use when addressing their constituents, for it was not a pleasant word to British audiences, and they would have to adopt some other system than the conscription for maintaining the efficiency of the Army at home and in India. He was sorry that Lord Wantage's Committee did not also inquire into the condition of the Militia. He thought that in the Militia they had a very strong force to fall back upon. He knew that officers and men in the Regular Army were rather inclined to sneer at the Militia; but his experience—for he had also served 10 or 12 years in a Militia regiment—was that as a reserve force we could look to the Militia with great confidence. The men in the Militia might not be drilled with the same efficiency as the men in the Regular Forces, and their appearance was not so good, which was perhaps mainly due to the clothing supplied them; but they were a fine body of men; they were of greater age than the men in the Line regiments; they were hardened by their labour for their bread during the portion of the year they were not in training, and they could do a better day's work in marching than a Line regiment could perform. The Army at home was maintained almost entirely for the purpose of providing drafts for the Army in India; but the Report of Lord Wantage's Committee pointed out the extraordinary fact that only about 20 per cent. of the soldiers serving in the ranks at home were fit to be sent out to India. Some of the men were near the end of their service; others were too young, and others again were not suitable for India from a medical point of view. The Report explained the youth of the soldiers by saying that the inducements offered by the service did not attract those who were capable of earning a man's wages in the labour market, and only attracted immature lads who were unable to earn a man's wages. Lads of 15 or 16 years

of age were enlisted in some instances, though they were supposed to be older, and they had to spend one or two years in the ranks at home before they were fit to pass even the lenient medical examination for service in India. He asked the House to consider the enormous expense of that system. An effective soldier cost the country £55 12s. a year, and we had to spend that sum on every one of the men for one or two years before they could give a day's work. He could hardly believe his eyes when he read the figures given by the Inspector General of Recruiting of the invalids in the Army. In 1892 the number of men under two years' service amounted to 56,204, and out of this number 798 were discharged invalided. These figures were most startling, he thought. A soldier's life ought to be the healthiest of lives. The food was good, or ought to be good, for the country would not tolerate bad or insufficient rations being supplied to its soldiers; the discipline, the exercise, the warmth and comfort of the barracks ought to make the health of the men good; but instead of that a large proportion were invalided after two years' service. He reckoned that these invalid soldiers cost the country a vast sum every year, for which no value was returned. The people thought a good deal of this expenditure of money. In Scotland, at least, they thought the Army was a good deal too costly. He also honestly believed it was too costly, and he thought that means should be adopted to maintain an efficient Army at a less expenditure of money. He did not think the Secretary for War could as with a fairy's wand change all this at once; but he hoped the right hon. Gentleman would take into consideration the various suggestions which had been made for relieving the country of this great burden. He knew that the officers of the Army—and he believed the men also—had confidence in the right hon. Gentleman, and believed he would do his best for the service; and he would take the opportunity of saying that whenever he asked a question on military affairs the right hon. Gentleman always gave him a civil answer, which was not invariably his experience when he asked questions in the discharge of his duty to his constituents. He hoped the right hon. Gentleman would do some-

thing to improve the service in the Militia. The Inspector General of Recruiting bore testimony in his Report to the fact that the Militia, as a recruiting ground for the Army, was very effective indeed; that the recruits thus obtained were exceedingly good, and that their numbers had been largely increased. According to the Returns the number of men in the Militia was 113,000, and they had supplied 16,000 recruits to the Line in one year. These recruits were far better than the recruits picked up in the street by the recruiting sergeant. But the Militia was not used to its full extent as a recruiting ground for the Army. He believed that a few concessions would do a great deal towards improving the efficiency of the Militia, and increasing the number of recruits which pass from it to the Army. Lord Wantage's Committee suggested that a list should be prepared of efficient volunteers who would be willing to serve in the Army in the event of a small war; and he thought that if a small payment was given to Militiamen to induce them to go into the Army it would be the means of greatly increasing the forces available in the time of war. He considered the time for the training of the Militia was longer than employers of labour liked to spare their men, and perhaps it would be well to shorten it. Then he did not think the time of training was properly employed, and if there was a better system of drilling the results would be more satisfactory. There was, as a rule, in every case a very efficient permanent staff; but its members had too much to do to give proper attention to the drilling of the men, and he thought some arrangement should be made by which sergeants should be sent out from Line regiments to assist the non-commissioned officers of Militia regiments in the work of drilling during the period of training. To place the Army in a state of greater efficiency was of vital importance to the country; and the next thing was to get that efficiency at the least cost, and he thought he had pointed out how that might be attained.

COLONEL C. W. MURRAY (Bath) said the hon. and gallant Gentleman who had seconded the Motion had so fully discussed the question of administration of the Army that he would not follow him into that field. But as the

Committee of Lord Wantage had been mentioned in the Motion, he desired to say a few words to the House on that question. The main points placed before the Committee for discussion and report were: (1) the conditions of recruiting and inducements to recruit; (2) terms and conditions of service with the Colours and reserve; (3) advantages on discharge. Recruiting appeared to have been last year very good, but they could not rely upon that exceptional state of things, and should still consider the inducements to gain recruits. It was recommended in the Annual Recruiting Report by the Inspector General, as well as by the Wantage Committee, that power should be given to recruit in anticipation of the waste which could be foreseen in the immediate future, to prevent in good recruiting times the check caused when the establishment authorised by Parliament was reached. Would this be done? There was no recommendation to this effect brought forward by the War Minister as yet, but he hoped it might be done later. There appeared to be a large number of special recruits. These, as the House knew, were boys not up to the standard of 5 feet 4 inches in height and 33 inches in chest. This was small enough, but it appeared that in 1890 about one-fourth of the whole number of recruits were specials; in 1891 rather more than one-third of the whole number; in 1892 about one-third. This was unsatisfactory. He had seen such weakly lads break down on active service almost before the campaign began. He considered that, besides inducements to join, inducements should be held out to the taxpayer to pay willingly for what he received, and that he should be sure of having a good and serviceable soldier. That was not the case here. The Inspector General says a large proportion are unfit for some time after enlistment to bear the strain of a soldier's life. That proportion may be diminished by increased vigilance in scrutiny of returns of specials furnished weekly by approving officers. This increased vigilance should at once be practised. It was worth considering whether it was advisable to go on paying a man's wages to this class, or whether it was not better to enlist them as specials at less pay, and keep them developing until they were fit to take their place in the ranks, the

money saved by this to go as an inducement to a better class to join as men fit for work. The behaviour of the class of recruits now obtained for the Army was better than formerly. There were not the same habits of drink and crime, and punishments were less. There was some minor insubordination traceable to youth, and also to the youth of the younger non-commissioned officers. It had been stated by many of those who gave evidence before the Committee that, "as a rule, our regiments at home are useless for service." That had been the result also of his experience of a great many of the young men who went abroad on active service. There had been a tendency to catch the recruit by plausible statements, and afterwards not altogether to keep to the spirit of the agreement. The soldier should know exactly what his pay was to be, and vexatious deductions, especially for food, which he only really found out after enlistment, should be abolished. In the Memorandum of the Secretary of State for War it was stated that—

"Measures have been adopted to equalise the number of stations of Infantry at home and on foreign service,"

but no mention was made of the establishments. This was a very essential part of the organisation of 1872. The Memorandum goes on to say that—

"Even what has been done will be at once disturbed by the dispatch of extra battalions to Egypt."

This was exactly the thing which was required to be avoided. It took place in 1877, five years after the establishment of the organisation, and had never been restored. Now the right hon. Gentleman told them that the equality had been re-established, and in the same sentence that it was again disturbed. The territorial system of 1872 had not been carried out in its integrity. At the time of the Report of the Wantage Committee there were 11 more battalions abroad than at home. For the present year it appeared that there would be three battalions of Infantry abroad in excess of those at home. But the establishments which were originally intended to be the same would now still be very disproportionate. At home the Infantry would number 57,000, and abroad over 74,000. This was a great disproportion out of the number at home, only it was found that only about

20 to 30 per cent. were available for drafts, in consequence of various causes; one special cause being that a very large number were under age. In this matter of drafts to fill up the gaps in the forces abroad there seemed to be a yearly increasing deficiency. They should by some means have sufficient men to be sent out yearly. At present there was a constant struggle to make up the deficiency, with the result of leaving the regiments at home in a state almost of collapse and inanition. Another point in the territorial question was, that it should be carried out to the extent of quartering regiments in their own territory, to enable them to be more in connection with the various county branches of Militia and Volunteers. At present most regiments never went near their territorial districts from the time they come from abroad to the time they go back, and were never seen by the battalions of Militia and Volunteers. A very successful experiment was made with a Welsh regiment, and it was stated that a sensible increase of recruiting took place. This was strongly recommended by the Inspector General of Recruiting, and he should be glad to hear that the Military Authorities proposed to continue the practice in the same form. There was a point connected with the Reserve which he thought had never been sufficiently attended to. The training of the Reserve men, when there was any at all, was entirely sufficient to enable them to take their place again in the ranks. Everything in military affairs changed so rapidly. The Reserve man came back and found a new drill, new rifle, and everything new. All Reserve men should be obliged to join some force in which they could receive training in drill and shooting. The Volunteers would perhaps be convenient for this. He entirely disapproved of the present system of giving a large accumulation of pay to the soldier on leaving the Colours, and then requiring of him the impossible task of paying it back if he rejoined. He considered that whatever pay or gratuity was accumulated for the benefit of the soldier should be treated in the manner of gratuity or pension; if it was pay, then it should be added to by the State in proportion to the time he continued to serve in the Reserve after leaving the active Army, a small sum being given to him on

leaving the colours to start him in life. It was a great advantage to a man to have learned a trade in the Army. It would have a good effect on discipline, and prevent men from wasting their time in public-houses, and would be a vast advantage in after life, giving the man a chance of gaining a livelihood. Reserve men of the best character should be employed as much as possible in Government posts. This was very strongly recommended by the Wantage Committee, and the Inspector General for Recruiting in his Report, strongly recommended it.

"There would be no difficulty in obtaining the requisite quantity of recruits, and of greatly improved quality. If the plan followed in Germany were established here the recruiting difficulty would disappear, and with it the disinclination of the middle and lower classes to allow sons to select the Army as a profession."

The Secretary of State for War lately, in answer to a question, stated that as far as he was aware only 13 appointments under Government had been given during 1892 to discharged and reserved soldiers. As more than 16,000 went to the Army Reserve on completion of service, this seemed a very small proportion, and he should be glad to know that every effort was made to give Government employment to discharged soldiers of the best character. It was a matter for great regret that the present Government should not consider themselves in a position to carry out any of the recommendations of Lord Wantage's Committee, except of increasing the pay of lance corporals. Lance corporals and bombardiers were a useful body, but did not make an Army. The late Government were evidently in earnest in wishing to place the Army in a proper state—the Committee was a War Office one—and had matters of great importance to discuss and report upon. It was hoped that, as in the Navy under the late Administration, great improvements would be effected. But, unfortunately for the Army, the Government that appointed the Committee went out of Office, and now it appeared that, like a Royal Commission on the Army which preceded it, it was to be shelved, or perhaps to be made to wait until the late Government should return to Office and reconsider it. The right hon. Gentleman stated that financial considerations would prevent the present Government from

taking many steps at present towards carrying out the recommendations. But what was the object of having a Committee sitting at great expense and taking evidence? Was it not because there were known to be important considerations to be attended to, and he felt sure that the country, if it required an Army at all, desired that that Army should be efficient, and in a condition to do any duty required of it. The cost of placing the Army in a perfect state as regarded number and efficiency would be a very small item compared with the amount demanded from the British taxpayer to start the Prime Minister's useless scheme of Irish Government, and he would recommend to the right hon. Gentleman's careful consideration, although he was afraid his recommendation would not receive that consideration, whether the money would not be better spent in making our Army good enough to do justice to a great nation and sustain our Imperial position than in establishing a sham Government in Ireland.

Mr. H. O. ARNOLD-FORSTER (Belfast, W.) said that, although he was a very new Member of the House, he had been a witness of what had taken place on the Army Estimates on many previous occasions, and he must say he regretted that the position which had been taken up in the past seemed likely to be continued in the future, and that absolutely no public interest was likely to be taken in this great question of the maintenance of the Army, on which they were asked to vote no less than £20,000,000 sterling. It had been established, he should think, to the satisfaction of every hon. Member who had heard the hon. and gallant Member for the City of Oxford, that from the logical point of view they could not, in the nature of things, with their present organisation have a good Army. He was now going to try and show that, as a matter of fact, they had not got a good Army. He thought this was emphatically a question for the Imperial Parliament. They had precedents in this question of great value. There was no doubt that matters at the Admiralty were now very satisfactory, and that they might well be able to entrust their maritime defence to them; but they could not have the same confidence in regard to the War Office in its present condition.

It was an essential and desirable thing that the House of Commons should have cognisance of this matter. Something could be done by the House of Commons ; everything had been done in the case of the Navy by the House of Commons. Let them take their minds back five or six years, and consider what was the then condition of the Navy. He would ask the House to remember that, owing to the pressure which was brought to bear in this House, and by those who were instrumental in forming the opinion of Members, the Navy was absolutely revolutionised, and that £11,000,000 sterling were asked for and voted in a single 12 months to enable the Navy to go to sea, in case of war. Therefore, it was right to put what pressure they could to-day upon the War Office. Three times within recent memory Parliament had charged Commissions to inform it of the state of the Army. There was a Commission under Mr. Justice Stephen; there was one under Lord Hartington ; and a Committee under Lord Wantage ; and those Commissions had, without exception, one and all reported that the condition of the Army was as bad as it could possibly be. They presumed that the Army for which they paid so many millions was an Army which was capable of doing something. He would ask whether the War Office had provided them with the means of contemplating the possibility of a great Continental war ? The answer was given as follows in the Report of Lord Hartington's Commission :—

"There does not appear to exist sufficient provision by either Service for the wants of the other; little or no attempt has ever been made to establish settled and regular intercommunication or relations between the Services; no combined plan of operations for the defence of the Empire in any given contingency has ever been worked out or decided upon."

Having failed to provide for war on a large scale, had the War Office made any adequate preparation for war on a small scale ? Here was another statement, a statement made last year in the evidence given before Lord Wantage's Committee :—

"The provision of expeditionary battalions to be sent abroad in case of a small war was a point which certainly was not worked out by Lord Cardwell's Committee, and no plan that I know of has been worked out by any Committee, or by the War Office, with a view to meet that emergency."

*Mr. H. O. Arnold-Forster*

Unless the Secretary of State for War could tell them that the War Office had entirely altered the state of things, unless he could give them some plan to provide for the contingency of a general war or a small war, the War Office had failed in the purpose for which it existed. He had seen something of foreign Armies, and he asserted, without hesitation, that in the modern sense of the word, as it was understood by experts of other countries, our Army was not an Army. He contended that Parliament, with these grave facts before them, was bound imperatively to demand from Ministers of the Crown an account of the money with which they were entrusted. He advised hon. Members to visit from time to time our military establishments, and see for themselves the state of things which prevailed. He now came to another serious matter which the House might well take into consideration. They did not get proper information in these matters; there was a hole-and-corner system pursued at the War Office which was not pursued at the Admiralty. Every fact was given them by the Admiralty, but the facts were withheld from them by the War Office. But those facts were really public property everywhere except in this country. He would give an example of one or two of the things he meant. He was sure the Secretary of State for War would not object if he referred to a matter which had occurred during the last two or three days. A day or two ago he put down a question on the Notice Paper to the Secretary for War regarding the number of 9-pounder muzzle-loading guns which were now in the hands of the Field Artillery. These guns were of an entirely obsolete type and were out-ranged and out-classed by nearly every gun in the Russian Service. The reply that he received from the right hon. Gentleman was that it was undesirable either that such a question should be put or answered. He could not help pointing out that such Returns were printed and circulated every single month throughout the year, and, as a matter of fact, the figures on this matter were published by himself in the very last edition of a small pamphlet he had written on this subject last year, and the figures were still substantially correct. We had at this moment in India nearly 200 of these

obsolete 9-pounder muzzle-loading guns with the field batteries. What was the remedy for this state of things? There was only one remedy for it, and that was to get rid of these useless guns, and to replace them with modern 12-pounder guns. These new guns could be obtained in 12 months. So grotesque was the condition of things that at this moment at Woolwich, our only school for the instruction of Artillery officers, they positively had not got enough guns to supply an experimental battery for the instruction of cadets, but every single gun used for instruction purposes was of an obsolete type. The same state of things once prevailed on the gunnery training ships at Plymouth and Portsmouth, but it had been remedied and guns provided for the Navy of the most modern type. Meanwhile, at Woolwich there was only one of the new guns, and that of a discarded pattern, and the cadets were compelled to practise with the old 9-pounder. He contended that monthly Returns ought to be published which would give information with regard to guns in use in the Service. He had tried, but had failed, to get Returns which would show the actual state of the Service battalions and Service batteries at Aldershot. He was able to get them by personal research last year, and had he had time he might possibly have done so this year. He wanted the House to understand that when they saw these battalions and batteries put down as having some 1,200 men in the First or Second Army Corps, that was, if he might say so, a fraud on the public. One Infantry battalion which he had in his mind, and forming part of the First Army Corps, stood on the list as being 1,100 men answering the roll call, and the country believed that all these men were ready for service. What was the fact? This very battalion was asked to furnish a draft of 200 men fit to go to India, and out of 1,100 men they had not 200 men fit to go to India, and they could only send 180 men. That was not an unfair example of battalion after battalion, and he wanted to know how many men in our battalions were disqualified at the present moment under the rules existing for the regulation of the Army from proceeding to India when they were ordered to go, and when such a Return was given a re-

markable state of things would be found to exist. These facts showed that the War Office had not done its duty in this matter; they had been misled by the War Office; they were not getting proper information, and were not getting value for the money which they spent. Lastly, he wished to say a few words about the grievances of the men. These grievances had been known for a long time. It did not require a Commission to tell them that the men were underfed, and one of the first things that ought to be done was to provide a proper meal after the afternoon meal for every soldier in the Army. Another thing that was well known without any Commission being necessary was that boys, on enlisting, were misled by the recruiting sergeants; and that these boys were physically unfit to undertake, not merely the labours of a campaign, but the ordinary daily routine of barrack life. The medical officers' returns showed the disastrous effect upon the young soldiers of a nine miles' march on a warm summer's day. If they wanted to get proper men for the Army, they must pay them properly, treat them properly, and feed them properly. Some other prospect than the workhouse must be given the men after they have left the Service, and it was a humiliating thing to have to say that at present that was the only prospect before many of these men. Only the other day he got a Return showing that 160 discharged soldiers passed through one casual ward alone in the course of a year, and what was going on in the case of one casual ward was going on in the case of many. The people of the country took a very deep interest in these military questions, as he knew from experience by addressing civilian audiences, and he could not repress a feeling of shame when at a large meeting he addressed in the East of London the other day, he found there was scarcely a man in the whole of that audience who did not speak in terms of absolute scorn and abhorrence of the career of men who were compelled to enter the Army. Until some step was taken to remedy the grievances of the men, to treat them properly, and to make the Army popular, this feeling with which the Army was regarded by many people would not be got rid of. One step in the direction of reform which the authorities might at

once take was by improving the condition of many of the recruiting stations. One of the most important recruiting stations in the country was St. George's Barracks within a few hundred yards of that House, and its condition was simply a disgrace. To enter it one must go through an avenue of slums, and they could not put a man in a more humiliating position who was taking this important step in life by joining the Army, when they compelled him to go through such a place. Many other recruiting stations were also in a similarly unattractive state, and he would suggest that this, at any rate, was a matter which might be remedied almost immediately. He contended that the War Office had failed in its primary duties for which it was created, and that until it was shown it had taken steps to fulfil those primary duties it stood condemned. There were some obvious things which could be done without waiting, by the ordinary administrative process, and there were other things which would demand the countenance and assistance of a willing House of Commons, which he was perfectly certain would in the future, as in the past, never be withheld from any Government who came down to the House and said they desired to have these things in the interests of the Army and of the country.

\*MR. E. STANHOPE (Lincolnshire, Horncastle): Mr. Speaker, to anyone who like myself or like the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary of State for War has had to deal with many of the subjects mentioned in the course of the Debate to-night the prospects are sufficiently appalling, for even in the small number of speeches delivered we have had speeches so full of matter and so full of suggestion that it is almost impossible for anyone like myself to attempt to deal even with a small part without trespassing to a somewhat serious extent on the attention of this House. But, Sir, it seems to me it is right I should rise at this stage of our proceedings, because I can, at any rate, bring to bear upon our discussion to-night some practical experience of very recent date with regard to the many subjects that have been brought under our consideration. Now, Sir, the Motion that has been made in the Committee to-night by my noble Friend relates to two subjects. It deals with the cost of the Army, and it deals

with its efficiency. I ask leave to say two or three words upon each of these before I go into the details of the various subjects which have been brought forward to-night. Now with regard to the cost of the Army, I do not suppose that anybody in my position, or in the position of the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary for War, would deny that the cost of the Army is very large. I am quite sure that everybody who has filled the position I have had the honour to fill would desire to reduce it to the utmost extent consistent with its efficiency. And I am bound to say, after very careful consideration of all the circumstances concerning attempts at economy, that although I think there are some economies that might be effected in our Army system, little by little, yet I cannot but doubt that there are other subjects, such for instance as the enormously increased attention being paid to the condition of the soldier in all parts of the world, which must inevitably add to our expenditure almost as much as the most careful economy can take from it. I have great experience of this subject, because I had the honour of serving upon the Committee appointed by this House, and of which my noble Friend the Member for South Paddington was the Chairman. We examined every branch of our subject. We spent two years in that investigation, and the witnesses that were called were certainly not witnesses favourable to any existing administration of the Army. They were called by my noble Friend himself on his own responsibility as the witnesses he thought most able to render assistance to the Committee, and I bear my willing testimony to the services that were rendered by that Committee, because I think they did lay the ground for various useful reforms, and for some reduction of expenditure in various departments. But nobody who was on that Committee can doubt also that there were suggested to us in the course of that investigation various directions in which our expenditure was inadequate, and the ultimate result of that Committee undoubtedly was that although we cut off small sums in various directions it led to much larger expenditure in others, and the result to the Exchequer was an increased charge. I am afraid also I draw the same experience from

what I hear in this House. We have a good deal of economy in the abstract, but we hear very little of it as applied to particular instances, and my experience in this House has been that, whereas hundreds of speeches are made in which it is urged that expenditure should be curtailed in one direction or another, there is, perhaps, one speech in which the slightest suggestion is made towards diminishing the expenditure in the Army in the particular direction in which one might hope some reduction might be made. I should like to say that I have listened, and I am sure the House has listened, with great satisfaction and interest to the first speech of my hon. and gallant Friend the Member for Oxford. He has a very distinguished record in India, and we were glad to hear the efficient manner in which he contributed to our Debates. His main suggestion for the reduction of expenditure is a reduction in the Staff and the number of officers employed. I have always felt, for my own part, that the Staff was larger than might be actually necessary, and it would be a great thing if some proportion of that Staff were reduced. But I have always been met face to face with the fact—and everybody will have to be met face to face with the fact—that we have to provide officers not only for our very small Army, but for the Army we could mobilise if we had to defend the country. We should have to put in the field 500,000 or 600,000 men, and nobody can doubt that the demand on the officers of the Army in such a time would even be largely in excess of the number of officers we possess at the present moment. I have always thought we had an excessive number of General Officers, and I have taken my share in endeavouring to reduce that number. But with regard to the officers below the rank of General, I am certain that we do require a very much larger number than can be suggested by the speech of my hon. and gallant Friend. It is of primary importance that we should not unduly reduce the number of officers in this country, or when the time comes for a general mobilisation of the forces we shall find ourselves short of the number we require. I think my hon. and gallant Friend in his attempts to find a direction for economy was not happy. He mentioned the case of Aden. I know a

great deal about that, and I do not think in the course of my connection with the War Office I ever came across a grosser case of the expenditure of money, far above anything from which money ought to have been spent, than the manner in which by the Indian Public Works Department the defences at Aden were carried out. I pass from the question of cost to that of efficiency. Is the House prepared to say for one moment that the Army at the present time is not efficient? Now let me examine details. Does anybody dispute that the Army in India is efficient? The Army in India is composed of men thoroughly qualified for the object with which they are raised, and there never was a time in the history of India when the Army in that country was in all respects more efficient for military purposes than it is at the present time. I come now to the Army at home, and I venture to say that there also the Army in this country is more efficient and more thoroughly suitable for warlike purposes than ever it was in the history of this country. I do not want to trouble the House by quoting authorities in defence of that proposition, but I should like to quote one single witness. We have heard quoted to-night the authority of Lord Wolseley. And what does Lord Wolseley say about the efficiency of the Army at the present time? This is what he says—

“Of this there can be no doubt, that since the Peninsular War we have never had so strong or so efficient an Army. Looking at it as a military machine, it has never been so fit for quick conversion into a fighting army in the field, and never before has this country been in a better position to resist invasion.”

I think there can be no stronger testimony to the position of the Army, which I assert is at the present time in a more efficient condition than ever it was before. The state of recruiting cannot be described as otherwise than satisfactory, and my noble Friend the Member for West Edinburgh (Viscount Wolmer) in his speech was a little behind the date in many of the details he brought forward. Let some of those who have studied the condition of the Army be good enough to read the Report of the Inspector General of Recruiting. That Report is in all respects eminently satisfactory. I should like to say one word before I go on about the Inspector General of Recruiting. I had the honour of appoint-



ing him. He at once directed his attention towards the very grave matters with which he had to deal, and he submitted proposals to Lord Wantage's Committee, of which that Committee approved almost without examining them further. Those proposals have been carried out. We have had during the past year the most energetic Inspector General of Recruiting, and the result of the efforts he has made has been the vast improvement which I am about to record. I am not going for a moment to defend the past history of recruiting. I did not try to defend it last year, but, on the contrary, I said all the evidence before us proved that the recruiting system had been very bad indeed, and great reforms were required in it. Those reforms have been made, and now what is it the Inspector General of Recruiting says? He tells us in his Report for last year that the recruiting for the Cavalry was very brisk, and the minimum age was raised from 18 to 19. He also tells us that whereas the Royal Artillery was previous to that time short of men, it is now, in almost every respect, over its standard. I can say upon my own authority, and upon the authority of men more competent to judge, that the Guards have never been in a more satisfactory condition—at any rate not for the last 20 years. Their recruiting is excellent, they have raised the standard to 5 feet 9 inches, and everyone who knows what the Guards are would acknowledge that they are an admirable type of men for the purposes for which they are required. One hon. Member has asked why the Members of the House do not go and look for themselves at the men of the Regular Army. If hon. Gentlemen will only do so they will be perfectly satisfied, and they will see that the men of the Regular Army are far better than they have been for many years past. The Inspector General reports that, whereas in 1890 we only raised 19,000 men, last year we raised from 25,000 to 26,000. Though some of the men were under the standard at the time, yet they were all of them as good as could possibly be required for the Regular Army. I do not think, then, any one can doubt that our Army is at present in a more satisfactory condition than it has been for a long time past. As to the other elements of the case, our Army at the present moment is better

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armed and better equipped than it has ever been before. We mobilize it in a manner in which it could never be mobilized before. We have a scheme of mobilization which can be acted upon, if there was any danger, to-morrow. Garri-  
sious can be provided and established at a very short notice; and then again, a question of importance, the relations between the Army and the Navy, which sometimes have been a cause of difficulty, are now of a most cordial character. I believe that the co-operation of the Army and the Navy was never more satisfactory. I do not suggest that there are not reforms yet to be made. On the contrary, I have never held any other language, because I have never disguised from the House that other reforms ought to be made. But there is one great difficulty besetting the War Office, than which there is no greater. The fluctuations of public opinion from one time to another make the task of the War Office very difficult. At one time every one is for spending money upon the Army, at another every one is for cutting down the expenses. If we could only make up our minds as to the amount of force required for the defence of the country and for operations abroad, and if in season and out of season we stuck to it without regard to the fluctuation of public opinion, we should advance more than we have done. And now I come to deal with some of the reforms which have been suggested. The first is with regard to the higher administration of the Army. Well, I do not deny that the Staff at Headquarters must appear to many people who have not looked thoroughly into the matter an expensive Staff. No one will deny that our position in this country is enormously complicated by various considerations—first of all, by the control which the Treasury and this House exercise over Army matters, a control which I am bound to say creates increased expenditure, and which is complicated by the very peculiar constitution of the office of Commander-in-Chief. My hon. and gallant Friend the Member for Oxford quoted various Reports; but I can tell him that of all the difficulties with which Secretaries of State has to contend one of the greatest is the enormous number of contradictory recommendations with regard to Army organisation. The

moment they get a certain number of men together they find such a variety of recommendations that it is exceedingly difficult for anyone to start from them, and when my hon. and gallant Friend quotes various Reports and says that nothing has been done he is probably speaking without any precise knowledge of what actually has been done. My hon. and gallant Friend spoke of Sir James Fitzjames Stephen's Commission. Sir James Fitzjames Stephen's Commission was appointed to inquire into suggestions and possible corruptions in the Ordnance Department, but they reported upon other matters without having examined witnesses. Even the Secretary of State was not examined. If very much weight is to be attached to the recommendations of that Commission other witnesses ought to have been examined. But there is Lord Morley's Committee also, and I attach great weight to the Report of Lord Morley's Committee. Is my hon. and gallant Friend not aware that, in consequence of the Report of that Committee, we separated inspection from manufacture, and that the result, as can be shown by abundant evidence, has been most satisfactory? The weapons supplied to the Army were at one time defective, but they are at present very much better weapons. The division of the Vote for Stores has also been carried out. The result has been the establishment of separate responsibility for the Navy as well as separate responsibility for the Army as regards the stores supplied, and while there have been some difficulties of administration these have been got over. But, to return to the question of the higher administration, my hon. and gallant Friend said that in 1888 various changes have been made of which he disapproved. One of the changes made was this—I am using my own words—

"We propose to hand over to the Military Departments, subject only to the financial control and supervision of the Secretary of State, the administration of all the executive duties of the Army and headquarters. We hope to fix upon each military head of Departments full responsibility for that branch of the Service which he controls."

This proposal, which was actually carried out, was based upon experience. I found that some alteration in the administration

was absolutely necessary, and at the time it was made it was generally approved. In the House it met with universal acceptance, and when it was examined into a few years later by the Commission over which Lord Hartington presided it was also generally approved of by that Commission. I do not gather that there is any great objection to it now. I am satisfied that under it very great advancement has been made. No complaint is now made of the weapons supplied to the Army, or of the manner in which the Supply Departments generally are managed. Why was this? Because, under the old system, the Civil Department administered the Transport, Supply, and Control Departments of the Army, and then when war came they had to stand aside and the Military Authorities had to take up those matters. My belief was that the Military Authorities ought to have control in time of peace as well as in time of war, and that they ought to be able to train their officers in time of peace for the duties they would have to perform in time of war. This was the basis of the steps which I took at that time, and I believe that those steps were not only the best at that time, but that no other organisation would possibly have worked under the existing constitution of the office of Commander-in-Chief. Then as to Lord Hartington's Commission, various quotations have been made from the Report of that Commission to show the various changes that ought to be made. I think I am entitled in my own defence to refer to the paragraph in that Report which points out that the Commission recommends that many of those changes, if not all of them, could only be carried out when there is a vacancy in the post of Commander-in-Chief. I accepted that recommendation in the spirit as well as in the letter. It was, however, impossible to carry out the recommendation without calling upon the Commander-in-Chief to retire. I was not prepared to take that step, and I did not believe the Army was willing that I should do so. I believed then, as I believe now, the present Commander-in-Chief retains the confidence of the Army, and I was certainly not prepared to call upon him to retire in order that certain changes in administration might be introduced, which cannot be introduced while he

holds that office. The Commission recommended that when a vacancy occurred in the office of Commander-in-Chief that office should be abolished; they proposed that there should be a Chief of the Staff, and they also suggested that there should be a Council of five military members to assist and advise the Secretary of State. Even upon that subject there has been a good deal of difference. The right hon. Gentleman the present Secretary of State, who was a member of the Commission, differs upon the main proposal of the Commission, for he is not in favour of the appointment of a Chief of the Staff at all, and he would further reduce the Council of the Secretary of State by that member. The hon. and gallant Member for Oxford was not in favour of any such Council at all; he would limit the advisers of the Secretary of State to two military members and one financial member—three altogether—but he would not urge the appointment of a Chief of the Staff at all. For my part, I am of opinion that the foundation of any reform that is to be effected in our Army system after the retirement of the present Commander-in-Chief is the creation of a Chief of the Staff, and I have done my best in regard to that proposal. The present Adjutant General of the Army is practically in many respects Chief of the Staff of the Army, but he ought to be made so in name, and not only in office. The first thing that ought to be done, if the opportunity arises, is to carry out the recommendation of Lord Hartington's Commission, and to create a real Chief of the Staff. He was aware that the present Secretary of State objected on the ground that a Chief of the Staff, whose duties were in practice to make plans of operations, would not in this country have enough to do. I admit the force of the objection, and I think that the Chief of the Staff might still have some executive duties. Having carefully considered this subject, I think that the proposal of a Chief of the Staff holds the field, and that, whatever other changes we may introduce into our War Department, our first duty is to establish an efficient Chief of the Staff. In 1887 the real difficulty which confronted me was this—there was no one military authority responsible for all the military efficiency

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of the Army. Take, for instance, the defence of the ports. In the case of the ports there were separate authorities responsible, first of all for the armament; secondly, for the works; and, thirdly, for the garrison; and the result was that there was no harmonious co-operation which enabled any complete scheme to be carried out with efficiency and proper effect. I tried to secure that there should be one military authority responsible for the carrying out of every scheme in every necessary respect, but at that time the only person properly responsible was the Secretary of State, and that official came and went. What I was anxious to see was that the military heads of departments should be working harmoniously towards a common object. Let us take the case of the coaling stations. When I came into Office I found that, though there had been a certain amount of money voted for the purpose of defending the coaling stations, no plan had been prepared for the purpose of providing for the garrisons of those stations, nor had there even been a suggestion made that money would be wanted for the purpose of barracks to house the garrisons. My belief at that time was this—that the best means of remedying this defect was to place the responsibility on one military head and to insist that any scheme which was brought forward—such as that for the defence of the coaling stations—should at the same time make provision not only for the armament, but for everything else subsidiary to it, and to take care that every one was informed of the necessity of formulating a complete scheme in order to make that defence successful. Unless an attempt is made to maintain some supreme military authority, having the main duty of harmonious co-operation between all the Departments of the War Office, it will be found, with changing Secretaries of State, that no scheme will lead to really satisfactory results in the administration of the War Office. It has been suggested that the military advisers of the Secretary of State should be allowed to publish their recommendations to the Secretary of State. Well, I am bound to say in regard to that, that, difficult as the position of that Official is at the present time, it would become absolutely intolerable were such a

suggestion given effect to. If we allow the Military Authorities under the Secretary of State to lay before Parliament their opinions on any question, it would be impossible for any Secretary of State to carry out the business of his Office for any length of time. It is also suggested that the financial control at present exercised is not satisfactory. I agree with that. I am of opinion that the result of the present control is to save shillings and spend pounds. I should like to see the system reformed from top to bottom, and I am sorry that the Commission presided over by Lord Hartington did not take upon itself the duty of revising it. I am sure that if an opportunity had been afforded of giving evidence as to the manner in which that system worked the Commission would have recommended drastic changes, resulting in a great alteration of the present system of financial control, and giving more control to the War Office. There are one or two other subjects touched upon by my noble Friend. With regard to Lord Wantage's Committee, he said that they recommended that the number of the battalions at home and abroad should be equalised. I cordially agreed with that recommendation. It has been pointed out that the recommendation has not been strictly observed. But an attempt was made to meet the difficulty not by increasing the cadres, but by adding to the number of men in each battalion. Mr. Childers fixed the number of men in the Infantry battalions at 450, the lowest figure ever reached; the late Government raised them to 700 or 710, at which figure they have been maintained for some years past. I quite admit that that does not meet our difficulty. I am, for my own part, anxious that steps should be taken for the purpose of redressing the balance between the battalions at home and abroad, and I rejoice to see that, although temporarily disturbed by the despatch of battalions to Egypt, the Secretary of State has taken steps which will tend clearly in the direction of the equalisation of the battalions at home and abroad. Then my noble Friend touched on the question of recruiting, and said that in past years there had been bad work in the Recruiting Department. I do not dispute that for a moment. I

think the evidence taken before Lord Wantage's Committee shows that the recruiting was not equal to the demands made on it, and that it fell short of what the Recruiting Department ought to be. There has been great activity under the present Inspector General of Recruiting, and I think the result proves that, at any rate, the Inspector General is alive to what ought to be done. Then it is said that the Home battalions are not, at the present time, in a satisfactory condition, and a number of distinguished authorities have been quoted in support of that statement. But these distinguished authorities, and everybody who has ever been connected with the administration of the Army, knows very well that the Home battalions are not, and never have been, regarded as efficient for service abroad without being reinforced from the Reserve.

VISCOUNT WOLMER: I never said they were.

MR. E. STANHOPE: I am glad to hear my noble Friend say that. The battalions, with the Reserves, are sufficient for every service they have to perform. I am glad to find that my noble Friend concurs in that. Under the short service system, you have to rely upon the Reserve to qualify the home battalions for foreign service. We have now got to the happy condition in which we have 80,000 men in the Reserve, and we are entitled to rely, and we do rely, on that Reserve to fill up the gaps in the regiments when they are required to go abroad. That is exactly what is done by every Foreign Power. Our system, after all, is similar to the systems in France and Germany, relying, as we do, upon drawing on our Reserves to qualify the battalions for foreign service, and no one can deny that England has to rely less upon her Reserves than any foreign country.

VISCOUNT WOLMER: What is the age of the men?

MR. E. STANHOPE: I say we have to rely less on our Reserves than either France or Germany, and we have a larger number of seasoned men in our battalions than either France or Germany; and this comparison holds good if made

with the normal condition of our Infantry battalions at the most unfavourable time of the year. It is a curious thing that whereas here, in England, a normal Infantry battalion has no less than 245 men of over three years' service and under 21, Germany has only 59, and France has only 23. Therefore, you cannot doubt that our battalions, whatever else you may say of them, have got a very much larger proportion of seasoned men than those of either France or Germany. Of men between two and three years' service we have practically as many as Germany, but we have a few less than France. Taking it as a whole, nobody can doubt that we have as good a proportion of really seasoned men as any foreign country. The noble Lord will argue against that that we have in our battalions a large number of men of immature age, but so have France and Germany. When the battalions are sent to war, these men have to be taken out of the battalion and sent to special training before they can be allowed to go to the front. That is what we have to do, and if we maintain that result while, at the same time, we are supplying these tremendous drafts for the battalions abroad, I say our system of short service cannot be said to have broken down. I am not disposed to argue that in every detail the system is complete. It is for the Secretary for War to say whether he can find in the Report of the Wantage Committee any suggestion calculated to improve the short service system; but I am entitled to say that I find in the Report confirmation, not only in words but in facts brought forward, that, upon the whole, the short service system holds the field, and that we can put our battalions in the field in a better state of preparation for war than France and Germany. My noble Friend has also raised a question of pay, and has urged that the proposal with regard to increase of pay which was made by the Committee should be adopted. Well, so far as I am concerned, I am bound to say that the best consideration I have given to the subject leads me to the conclusion that there is no reason for advising the House to sanction an increase. We have got a splendid accession of recruits—as many as we want in all branches of the Service, and this does not seem

*Mr. E. Stanhope*

to be a right and just time, in the interest of the taxpayer, to introduce a system under which the pay of the Army will be increased. We should take every pains to secure the comfort of the soldier, and many steps have been taken of late to add to his comfort. If in any respect there is a deficiency in the matter I should be the first to urge that it should be supplied. The hon. Member for West Belfast says, broadly, that the Army is underfed. I do not think there is any evidence whatever to support that proposition. Our recruits, after joining, improve every day, and in six months become fit for every duty. The question of feeding our Army exercised my mind very considerably, and I appointed a Committee over which the present Adjutant General, Sir Redvers Buller, presided. That Committee examined most carefully into the feeding of the Army and took evidence, and the result of their inquiry was that the present scale was quite adequate to meet the necessities of the case. Some suggestions were made on minor points of detail—in reference to the bread rations, for instance—which have since been adopted, but on the whole they were satisfied that the feeding was sufficient. With regard to the question of clothing, I do not find in the Estimates or the Memorandum of the Secretary of State any reference to it. So far as I was concerned, I was perfectly prepared to accept the Report of the Committee which inquired into this matter. The Committee made certain proposals, and I hope the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary of State will tell us what he has done in this respect. I have touched now upon the points which I consider most important, and I must say, in conclusion, that while I am of opinion that when the proper time comes there are changes which ought to be made in the higher administration of the Army, as for the Army itself the time has come when it had better be left alone. We have had changes year after year, changes arising out of the fluctuations of public opinion—at one time adding to the expenditure of the year, at another time cutting it down. My opinion is that the Army is now in that state when it had better be left to work out the problems that lie before it without those constant changes that we

have had in the past. I hope we shall soon arrive at a conclusion as to what the country requires as an Army to defend it, and that we shall no longer find one party striving to undo what the other party has done. So far as I am concerned, I shall support any Government that may be in power in their endeavours to make the Army efficient for purposes of national defence.

\*SIR CHARLES W. DILKE (Gloucester, Forest of Dean) : In the short time that remains before the Secretary of State replies on this Debate I should like to be allowed to criticise briefly the optimistic speech which we have just heard from the late Secretary for War. The debate has drawn forth several interesting speeches, especially those of the hon. and gallant Member for Oxford City and the hon. Member for West Belfast. The hon. Member for West Belfast spoke from the same point of view from which I shall attempt to speak—namely, that of the civilian and the taxpayer, who want to know whether they get value for the money they spend on the Army. Those of us who have given some time to the study of this question, and who are under the impression that the taxpayer does not get value for the money he spends, can hardly be satisfied with the speech we have just now listened to from the late Secretary for War. He told us pretty much what the hon. Member for West Belfast as a civilian told us—namely, that we have no Army in the modern sense of the word, and yet a sum variously computed at £17,000,000 and £20,000,000 spent on the Home Army, and a further sum of £16,000,000 on the Indian Army. The total of £36,000,000 or £37,000,000 is larger than the expenditure of any other nation on its Land Forces. And the question is what return we get for it, whether we get a proper return? The situation may be compressed into a brief phrase. We are a great Military Power when we consider the amount of charge we bear for military purposes, and we are a small Military Power, indeed, when we consider the result in efficiency. What is the answer? That "comparison is impossible." That it is useless to point out that we spend more on defence

than does France or Germany, Powers which can take the field with 2,500,000 trained men apiece, properly supplied with cavalry and guns; useless to show that Russia spends only £29,000,000 sterling upon her Army, only £34,000,000 (as compared with £56,000,000 in the British Empire) on defence, and that she keeps up a peace-footing of between 800,000 and 900,000 men, and of 160,000 horses. "Comparison is impossible," we are told, because we have no conscription. Yet of the heterogeneous forces shown on page 8 of our Army Estimates, the numerous Volunteer which figure so largely in the total draw no pay, and the Militia but little pay; while in the countries which possess conscription, each has a whole Army of re-engaged non-commissioned officers, who have to be paid sufficiently to make the Army compete with Civil employment, and in whose case conscription does not come into the account. Moreover, the conscription argument applies to the Navy, for Foreign Navies have, and we have not, conscription, yet our Navy is a cheap service which compares favourably with the French Navy. In fact, the conscript argument only affects our regulars; those regulars of whom we can find at home but a single corps, properly supplied with cavalry and guns and train, not even the two corps so often promised us, and still less the three corps of the late Secretary of State for War, or the seven of one of his Predecessors. Although we spend upon our Army the enormous sums which my hon. Friend the Member for West Belfast had pointed out, we are unable on account of cost to carry out those manœuvres upon a large scale which are essential to the efficiency of our Army, which are carried out by France with armies of 120,000 men, by Russia with armies of 180,000 and 150,000 in the same year, although Russia spends so much less than we do. The force which we get for our expenditure is to a large extent a sham. Page 8 of the Estimates shows regulars who are a mere *dépôt* for our Indian Army, generally composed of undrilled boys, weak in guns and horses and trained Generals. With these it lumps such curious forces as the Channel Islands Militia, although the Channel Islands are not in a condition of defence, and

would not be defended against a serious attack, and such forces as the Yeomanry (who are not drilled in time of peace to perform any of the duties which they would have to perform in time of war). We certainly cannot compare our Forces with the Forces of a great Military Power, although we can their cost, and although we shall shortly be in possession of a common frontier with a great Military Power in the neighbourhood of Afghanistan. Can we compare our Forces with those of a small Military Power? The late Secretary of State for War professes to have at home three Army Corps, which he makes up by using Militia, by taking 73 battalions of Regulars, although he only has from 70 to 72, and by counting in to his active Army every gun of his Artillery in the country except two batteries at Athlone. We possess nominally 52 batteries, of which 5 are *dépôt*, leaving 47 real batteries, of which 9 are horse batteries. Nine horse batteries and 38 ordinary field batteries to be compared with 8 horse batteries and 54 ordinary field batteries of Roumania. Short as they are of guns and cavalry, the late Secretary of State for War could only make his three Army Corps by using the Militia and the Irish garrisons, and counting 16 ammunition columns which do not exist in fact. We have at home batteries only enough for two Army Corps on a Continental footing, not three, and the mobilisation scheme of the late Secretary of State for War is in fact as unsubstantial, as completely a paper scheme, as that which bears the name of Mr. Gathorne Hardy. If we compare our Army with the smallest in Europe we find a similarity of force but a great difference of expenditure. Roumania turns out four Army Corps and an independent Cavalry Division, 154,000 men in all, for £1,500,000 sterling a year. I have already named her Artillery, which considerably exceeds our own. Switzerland also turns out four Army Corps of about 150,000 men, with a provision for filling up gaps during service in the field, and she has 48 field and two mountain batteries, which all shoot better than does our crack Royal Horse Artillery, and she has the best rifle in the world—all this for under £2,000,000 sterling. For our expenditure of £16,000,000 sterling at home, we can

*Sir Charles W. Dilke*

show only almost as many guns as Switzerland or Roumania, and we cannot horse our Cavalry. We spend on defence £38,000,000 in the United Kingdom, £17,000,000 in India (besides expenditure on those strategic railways which we do not bring into account), and £1,500,000 in the Colonies, or over £56,000,000 on defence, and there is no business man who sits within these walls who, if he were given a free hand, could not do it infinitely better for less money. What is the reply? No one has blamed, or wishes to blame, the present Secretary of State. There is room, no doubt, for a far closer and a far more authoritative joint consideration of the problem of naval and military defence than any which was given by the late Government or has been given by the present, but to say this is not to blame the present Secretary of State for War, who, on the whole, has done perhaps more, and is certainly more popular with the Army, than any of his Predecessors. He will hardly contend that the new scheme of mobilisation constitutes a reply. The one essential about mobilisation is rapidity, and this scheme takes people from one end of the country to another, in the same way as proved fatal to France in 1870, and cannot be pretended to possess that virtue. The only reply that has been made is that the Motion is vague. It is necessary to begin with a vague Motion, as we have to prove to the country that it gets nothing for the enormous cost it bears. We have to upset the present system before we can put a better in its place. But the Secretary of State for War is well aware that we have none of us shrunk from committing ourselves to plans. The gallant General who has seconded the Motion has published his. The hon. Member for West Belfast (Mr. Arnold-Forster) has published his. I have published mine; and different as is the basis from which we have started—some soldiers and some civilians—the points of difference are small. We are able to agree among ourselves, and to agree with the Mover of the Resolution of to-day, and, civilian though I am, and approaching the question chiefly from the taxpayers' point of view, I find myself in substantial agreement with three such great military

names as Lord Roberts, Lord Wolseley, and the gallant Member for Oxford City (Sir G. Chesney), with their immense experience. Lord Wolseley has been quoted by the right hon. Gentleman the late Secretary for War. Well, Lord Wolseley has used almost the words of the Motion of to-day, when he said that the country paid for an inferior article a price which would suffice to give it an effective military machine. The first essential is, that a Prime Minister and a Cabinet should take into their own close view, and out of the hands of the Departmental Minister, the consideration of this hugest branch of the National Expenditure, and of what we get for it. Then, turning first to India, where there is the greatest risk of active service against a European foe, we might save money and increase efficiency by unifying the command. It is a mere red herring to draw across the trail to pretend that it is any part of my scheme to insist upon a separate Army. This is a mere contest about words. Those who, in words, most strongly object to the separate Indian Army, like the Generals and the hon. Member for West Belfast, all agree that there must be two terms of enlistment, one for home, and one for foreign service; one with short service and large reserves, and the other with long service, as reserves are almost useless for the conditions of our Indian Army. We cannot wait for war to set these matters right. If the Naval School are justified in thinking invasion to be impossible, if we are to trust wholly to our Navy, then there is room for saving money at home and for modification of our home military system, and our attention should be turned to India and abroad. To my mind, there is some danger in this course of panic, as it might be of vital importance to us to be able to send away the Fleet. But, above all, we should remember that time will not be given to us; that danger in war in these days comes most early; that no Power possesses a perfect system; that our own conditions are peculiar, and that, whatever we do, we must not imitate. It is time that a capable Minister, like the present Secretary of State for War, should insist with the Cabinet of which he is a member on being allowed to deal with this question. He has considerable advantages in

dealing with the question. He is extraordinarily popular—extraordinarily, not in the sense that he does not deserve his popularity, but because it is universal. He is popular with the Army of all ranks, from the Commander-in-Chief downwards; he is popular with his colleagues, and with this House; and if ever there was a man who had a chance of distinguishing himself by inaugurating that which is one of the first necessities of the country—namely, a revolutionary scheme of Army reform, it is the right hon. Gentleman.

**LORD RANDOLPH CHURCHILL** (Paddington, S.): I can hardly offer my congratulations to my right hon. Friend who has just resumed his seat on the oration he has delivered upon the Army. The right hon. Baronet ranged over a very wide field. He hardly consented to argue. He dealt very freely in assertion. In his general statements as to the Army he was very profuse and diffuse, and in his admiration for the absence from the Debate of Party animus he really quite forgot to follow in his own discourse the example he so much admired. He indulged in a eulogy—and, I thought, rather an inflated one—of the present Secretary for War; but not a word of eulogy, not even a word of commendation, had he for the right hon. Gentleman's Predecessor, nor for any other Secretary of War who has belonged to the Tory Party. I quite agree that one should discuss Army questions without displaying Party spirit, but the principle must apply to both Parties if it is to be any good. The right hon. Baronet made some suggestions as to what should be done in the way of Army reform. I do not know whether it is necessary for me in a new Parliament to say that I am not altogether without title to offer some remarks on this question, seeing that I left the late Government on it. I sat on the Departmental Committee on general and military arrangements in 1886, and I had an opportunity of ascertaining many of the facts of the case, and of forming strong opinions on Army expenditure. That was, however, at a period following a long Liberal Administration, and though the Liberal Party may be celebrated for many things by which they have im-



proved the condition of the people, no one, not even on that side of the House, will claim that they have ever gained fame or renown for their conduct of military or naval affairs. The right hon. Baronet was no doubt right in much that he said about the cost of the Army, and the unfavourable comparisons which can be drawn between that cost and the cost of Foreign Armies. But it would have been well if the right hon. Baronet and those who agree with him had said all this years ago, when the circumstances were no different from those now prevailing. When I brought before Parliament, at great cost and sacrifice to myself, the opinion which I then maintained, that the expenditure on the Army and Navy was too large, and ought to be reduced, what assistance did I get from that side of the House? None whatever — absolutely none. Where was then the present Chancellor of the Exchequer, the fervent devotee of economy now, and where was the present Secretary for War, who has just received the eulogies of the right hon. Baronet? Not one word did either of them utter. The cause of economy was left in the hands of a single individual in the Conservative Party—an individual who sacrificed for the cause more than the whole Liberal Party had sacrificed in the course of a long series of years. I merely refer to this question because of the extraordinary attitude which has been adopted by the right hon. Baronet. I pass now to the questions more closely connected with the subject before the House. I have never denied that there are great faults still in our military system, and great defects in our Army. I am very much in accord with the late Secretary for War in holding that the organisation of the Army does call for reform, simplification, and for much larger and more powerful professional management than it now gets. But we must recollect what is the state of things now obtaining in the Army. We have a Commander-in-Chief with unique experience and recognised capacity for the general control, discipline, and command of such an Army as ours, and we might, if we made a sudden change now, when the Army has full confidence in its head, and introduced what I admit I myself have in a written document suggested, it is extremely

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likely that we should give a wrench to military feeling, which ought, if possible, to be avoided. I have no doubt that some day or other some military or Parliamentary man will be able to accomplish a large reform; but I am not clear that at the present time it would be desirable to attempt it. There is a great defect in our Army in connection with the Military Reserves. I believe that, as far as numbers go, they are satisfactory, as, I believe, they amount to 80,000 men, but it would be delusive to come to a conclusion as to the value of the Reserves by numbers alone. The fact is that the Reserves are totally untrained, and every military officer whose opinion you value will tell you that they would have to be braced up if called upon to serve in the field, simply because they have received no training since they left the Army. Of course that is a very difficult problem, which it would not be right for Parliament to carp with any Administration for not having solved. But, at the same time, until the Reserves are trained they ought not to be counted upon as a military resource. It is also true that the Army is not yet provided with a thoroughly efficient field gun. The Horse Artillery gun has been found somewhat unwieldy in operating rapidly across rough country, and the Military Authorities are face to face with the very difficult question of deciding upon and manufacturing a more efficient and easily-managed field gun. That is not so serious a fault, but it is undoubtedly a fault. The right hon. Baronet touched upon another defect when he said there was a deficiency of horses for the Cavalry. I believe it is a fact that the men in the Cavalry are double the number of the horses. I always think that this is very foolish economy. Military opinion is unanimous that Cavalry, at all events, should always be kept up to its full strength, and even if you cannot afford to mount all your men, I think it is better to have a smaller force properly mounted, fully equipped, and ready for active service. The right hon. Baronet ridiculed our scheme of mobilisation. That is a very old subject with him. It is very easy to make jokes about the different schemes for the mobilisation of the Army. It was during a Liberal Administration that the great dream of Military Power

was thought to be obtained when seven Army Corps were confidently counted upon by Ministers. Now it is said there are three Army Corps. I agree with the right hon. Baronet in a way. I myself am not quite sure of the accuracy of that calculation, and I doubt whether three Army Corps could be put into the field in full strength. But our Army Corps never profess to exceed in number 20,000 men.

MR. E. STANHOPE: Oh, yes; 35,000.

LORD RANDOLPH CHURCHILL: In that case my incredulity is rather strengthened. But I have often thought that these Army Corps were rather expressions than realities, and I never quite saw the object of using these particular terms. We understand what a Continental Army Corps means, but no Army Corps in this country could, even if we spent a good deal more, rival in size, in equipment, and in absolute perfection the great Army Corps of the Continent. I think, therefore, it is a great mistake to use that term. What I understand is, that at the present moment it would be easy for us to send to any of our possessions—say Africa or India—within a reasonable time a well-appointed expedition of about 50,000 or 60,000 men. The right hon. Baronet has talked about the cost of the British Army, but the proof that our expenditure is high is to be found in the fact that our expenditure on the Navy is not nearly so large relatively to its strength. When I protested against the military expenditure of this country the Army Estimates were £18,233,000. Since 1886 they have risen to over £20,000,000. A good deal of this, however, I think is by no means normal expenditure. There has been an increase in the cost of keeping the men, and a large sum has been expended on the manufacture of new rifles and upon barrack accommodation. On the whole, I think that the increase in the Army Estimates, though an apparent, has not been of normal increase, and that the normal cost of the Army is much about the same as it was in 1886. So that perhaps, with great respect to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, I may say

that efforts in the cause of economy, even if they go a great length, may not always be altogether wasted; they may be bread thrown upon the waters which after many days may return to us. I pass now to the comparison which the right hon. Baronet has instituted between the European Powers and England. That is a comparison I once made myself, and I thought it a very fine one. I came to the conclusion, however, after I had had more experience, that it would not bear all the examination which I thought it ought to bear. The right hon. Baronet makes much the same mistake as I made six years ago. He put together the expenditure of England and India on naval and military affairs, and says they amount to the enormous sum of £56,000,000. That figure will not bear the slightest examination. It is quite true that we have to spend something like that sum on the Army and Navy in England and the Army in India, but it is wholly illusory to compare lump sums of that kind. For the expenditure on our Navy, which is this year, I think, about £15,000,000, we do undoubtedly obtain the most powerful Fleet in the world, and the relative power of our Fleet when compared with the power of European Fleets does not fall far short of the relative power of the Armies of European Powers compared with our Armies. In that respect, therefore, our expenditure does not compare very badly with that of Foreign Powers. The Army of England, I think, numbers one way and another about 154,000, and when you add the Militia you get a total of something like 250,000 men. I will not talk about the Yeomanry, which the right hon. Gentleman ridiculed. I think I have heard a great many officers, whose experience is vastly greater than that of the right hon. Gentleman, say that under certain circumstances that force might be capable of performing important military duties.

SIR CHARLES W. DILKE: What I said was, that they were trained to perform duties other than those they would have to perform.

LORD RANDOLPH CHURCHILL: As to the increase which has taken place in the expenditure on Foreign Armies, I find from an article which appeared in the *Fortnightly Review* that

in 1891 the cost of the Russian Army was £39,000,000, while the average expenditure for three years before that was £32,000,000.

SIR CHARLES W. DILKE was understood to dissent.

LORD RANDOLPH CHURCHILL : I would remind the right hon. Baronet that mere assertion is not sufficient for the purpose of Parliamentary Debate. You must either have a recognised authority on which you make your assertions—

SIR CHARLES W. DILKE : The noble Lord will be able to work it out for himself if he will take the value of the rouble, or ask any friend in the City what a rouble is worth.

LORD RANDOLPH CHURCHILL : I will not let the right hon. Baronet drag me into the mysteries of the currency. The article I am referring to is well worthy of being quoted in the House of Commons. From 1888 to 1891 the Russian expenditure increased by £7,000,000. The French expenditure remained stationary at £28,000,000, and the German expenditure remained stationary also. Ours increased from £16,000,000 to £18,000,000, but the increase included a considerable expenditure on barracks and ports. I must really do justice—the necessity for doing so has only of late years dawned upon me—to my right hon. Friend opposite (Mr. Campbell-Bannerman), who during six years was Secretary for War. The right hon. Gentleman was attacked first from the Opposition side of the House, and then from the side of the House which was occupied by the supporters of the Government of which he was a Member. The right hon. Gentleman at first resisted too strongly the arguments that were used against him, but after I had sat on the Departmental Committee and increased my experience of military matters, and, moreover, after I had watched, without speaking in this House, the general military administration of my right hon. Friend, I was forced to come to the conclusion that, compared with all previous military administrations, it had been economical, and at the same

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time the maximum of efficiency had been obtained. It bears out my theory, for which I do not claim originality, that without economy you may never have efficiency. The moment you indulge in un-economical expenditure you indulge in wasteful and useless expenditure. That is an extraordinary fact, to which you will never find any exception. The Commission presided over by the present Duke of Devonshire worked very hard, and sat very long, and, though it is quite clear that the War Office did not act entirely upon the Report of that Commission, it is evident, both from the remarks of my right hon. Friend and from the general conduct of the War Office, that their labours were not wasted. An indirect effect has been produced by the Report, which has, I think, been invaluable. I find that in military affairs it is no good to impatiently expect rapid progress. It is not possible, consistently with our Parliamentary ideas, to make such progress. There are more potent arguments than may appear very clear to the Parliamentary and the public eye. I gathered from the right hon. Baronet that the highest model which he thinks the English Administration can follow is the management of the Army in India. I can quite understand, however, that military arrangements which might be deemed admirably suited for India are totally unsuited for this country. In India you have to keep the Army practically on a war footing; in England you can practically keep it on a peace footing. The whole circumstances of military drill and military life in India are totally different from those which prevail in this country, and I think it is a most dangerous proposition to say you ought to copy slavishly the system of military management which is in operation in India. I did not quite understand the illustration which the right hon. Baronet gave. I understood one of his illustrations to be that the Army in India ought to be unified under one command. I do not see how that bears on English Army reform, or why, if there is a defect in the Army in India in that respect, it should be applied to England.

SIR CHARLES W. DILKE : I beg pardon for interrupting the noble Lord. I did not hold up India as a model to us on

that point. I mentioned unification as a reform that was desired by everybody in India and thwarted by everybody at home.

**LORD RANDOLPH CHURCHILL:**

Well, I will not go into that because it is a digression from the main subject. I think, however, the House will agree with me that it is foolish to set up the Army in India as a model which we should follow, and to say that it is perfect. We have much that is good in our English military and naval administration, and I will say—if I may say it without provoking the displeasure of hon. Gentlemen opposite—that I think that there has been a very marked improvement during the administration of my right hon. and noble Friends who were at the heads of the Naval and Military Departments during the last Administration. No doubt there are still improvements to be introduced, and I shall watch with interest the career at the War Office of the present Secretary of State, because he has been so free in his criticisms and so prolific of severe, though not ill-natured, remarks while he has been in opposition that Parliament is undoubtedly entitled to expect from him very remarkable performances during his tenure of Office. I will not dwell longer on the speech of the right hon. Baronet (Sir C. Dilke), except to say that it presented a curious spectacle, such as we have not seen in this House for a very long time—that is to say, a combination of the Jingo and the Radical. There used to be a combination in old days which excited the greatest possible amount of comment—namely, that of Conservative Home Rulers, but the combination presented by the right hon. Baronet is even more puzzling than that. I do not know how far the right hon. Gentleman goes in his desire to make Great Britain almost a first-class Military Power. Taking into account the state of Europe, which I do not believe to be a warlike or dangerous state, while the expenditure on the Army is high, there has been a considerable, a marked, and an easily-traced improvement in the state of our military resources. If the Government are at all represented by the right hon. Baronet in the views he has expressed, and early reforms are to be

effected, you must have quiet Parliamentary times. Parliament cannot give its attention to the great Army question when it is occupied with far more exciting conflicts, and far larger questions. It is perfectly useless to advocate the reforms which the right hon. Baronet advocates on a quiet night like this if the great bulk of the Session is to be absorbed by far larger questions affecting the Constitution of the country. If during the last six years, when the country was quiet and tranquil, we had had the benefit of the assistance and advice of the Party opposite, it is possible that the improvement which I claim as having taken place in the Army and Navy might be more marked than it is. But in the consideration of these dull and quiet subjects the Party opposite take little interest. Other subjects claim their attention, and whatever improvement has been effected in the Military and Naval Services has undoubtedly been the work of that energetic, persevering, but at the same time unostentatious, administration which distinguished, certainly, the two great spending Departments during the late Government. I can quite understand the Secretary of State treating my observations as a matter of ridicule. I do not in the least mind it. I only want to say that the attitude I have taken in the past fully justifies me in assuming my present position on this subject.

**MR. A. J. BALFOUR:** Before the right hon. Gentleman speaks, might I intervene with an appeal to the Leader of the House to recollect the pledge he gave—[*Cries of "Order!"*—at Question time to-day, that our proceedings were not to be materially prolonged after 12 o'clock; and that he will permit us to hear the necessarily-important reply of the Secretary for War at a time when it will be possible both that he should be reported and that we should be able to discuss his statement.

**MR. W. E. GLADSTONE:** It appears to me that this Debate has attained a state of full ripeness for the speech of my right hon. Friend, not in exposition of his policy or his proposals, but his answer to the speech of the noble Lord who has made this Motion. I must confess nothing whatever is more inopport-

tune than to interrupt this Debate at the present moment.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR rose—[*Cries of "Order!"*]

MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN : It certainly does not appear altogether unreasonable that, after a Debate which has lasted from 6 o'clock, a Member of the Government, and the principal Member of the Government concerned, should have some opportunity of taking part—

MR. A. J. BALFOUR : In spite of your pledges !

\*MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN : I think the House will not be surprised that I rise to address it under the influence of some natural embarrassment after the very strong words which my right hon. Friend below the Gangway (Sir C. Dilke) made use of, which have been alluded to by the noble Lord who has just sat down, and also after the expressions of a similar nature which various Members have used towards me during the Debate. All I can say is that those expressions have placed upon me a burden of despair, because I am at a loss to understand what I have done to deserve them, and also what I can ever do to justify them. The noble Lord who has just sat down does not require anyone to pronounce an eulogy upon him, because he is quite ready to perform it for himself. The principal part of his speech, so far as I was able to follow it, was to recall to our minds the wonderful efforts he had made during the last Parliament in the interests of military economy.

LORD RANDOLPH CHURCHILL : General economy.

MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN : The noble Lord implied by an observation across the House that I was rather ridiculing that reference. I was not doing so, because we honoured him for the stand he made on that occasion in defence of opinions he honestly held. But I was a little surprised to find that the noble Lord should go so much out of his way in order to bury the hatchet in that old quarrel and make up matters with his friends around him. I must say that, having had some opportunity of watching the progress of military matters in the House and out of it, I was not aware of

*Mr. W. E. Gladstone*

any reducing effect on the Army Estimates which the noble Lord was able to produce.

LORD RANDOLPH CHURCHILL : I never claimed that I had.

MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN : But I am aware of this, that the noble Lord was instrumental in procuring a Select Committee upstairs, which sat upon the Army Estimates and discussed them for one or two years, with the result that in one direction and another large additional charges have been put on the Estimates.

LORD RANDOLPH CHURCHILL : No, no.

MR. BRODRICK (Surrey, Guildford) : There was a considerable reduction.

MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN : There may have been a reduction here and there, but the general result was, I will not say any extravagance, but increased expenditure. And I venture to say that that will be the probable result on every occasion when these questions are referred to a Select Committee.

LORD RANDOLPH CHURCHILL : I certainly am right in saying that that Committee recommended a reduction of expenditure.

\*MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN : I do not say the Committee recommended increased expenditure, but I was speaking of the general outcome of the inquiry. The speech of the right hon. Baronet the Member for the Forest of Dean was of a most belligerent character. He complained of the poor Army we have in this country, and he compared it with that of other nations on the Continent. He said we had no Army at all. The right hon. Baronet must remember that, after all, it effects, at all events, one of the most useful purposes for this country. It is the means of furnishing us with an Army in India which is the best and most efficient we have ever had in that possession. It is quite true that the Army is paid for by India ; but will the right hon. Gentleman endeavour to reckon up and assess the cost which is laid upon this country through the interruption which the calls of India cause in our ordinary military schemes at home? The right

hon. Gentleman says that a better return for the purposes of defence could be got for the money in these Estimates by any business man who might be selected for the purpose. 'Yes, Sir; if the business man had a *tabula rasa* on which to erect a new system, a more complete and symmetrical system than ours no doubt it would be. But the right hon. Gentleman, no doubt, will credit us with all that we suffer in consequence of old traditions, old associations, old prejudices, old vested interests in connection with the Army. These are the causes of a great deal of that extra expense of which so many complaints are made. My right hon. Friend alluded to one great reform which might be effected in India. I am glad to tell him—and I make haste to tell him at once, lest it may be thought it is owing to his speech that it is going to be done—that a Bill is about to be introduced in the other House by the Secretary of State for India for the purpose of doing away with those Presidency commands in India which, I believe, are most prejudicial to the efficiency of the Service in that country. Coming back now to the Motion before the House, I cannot but allude to its extraordinary nature, and as the consequence of that peculiar nature, to the very mixed character which the Debate has assumed. The Motion begins by announcing that it calls attention to the Report of Lord Wantage's Committee, and moves that—

"In the opinion of this House, the present system of military administration fails to secure either due economy in time of peace or efficiency for national defence."

The first observation which must occur to anyone on reading that Motion is, what in the world has the Report of Lord Wantage's Committee to do with the present system of military administration? It is as if the noble Lord were to say, "To call attention to Tenterden steeple and to move that the Goodwin Sands are a danger to navigation." The noble Lord tried to make out that certain deficiencies were due to the War Office—not to any system in the War Office, but to the War Office itself. He created out of his imagination a wicked entity called the War Office. He said it was owing to this that the battalions at home are weak, that the

Reserves are so few, and the cost so great; and he then proceeded to call authorities to prove his case. But who were the authorities that he called? the very officers who constitute this War Office which he attacks; and the very Committee on which he sat and to which he refers was largely composed of gallant officers who are or who have been connected with the administration of the War Office. I dare say that there is some justification for the faults which he finds, in the War Office at least, and that, perhaps, there are some necessary defects in our Army; but I deny that they are due to any particular system of administration in the War Office. They are, I think, the result, perhaps, of the natural errors which we are liable to make when we are feeling our way to the best organisation for an Army such as ours. The hon. and gallant Gentleman who seconded the Motion dealt with the subject of military administration with an authority and experience which few men in or outside the House could command. I can only say to him that I shall be only too glad to have his help in mending any of the weaknesses or defects in the military administration of the country. I do not think it is necessary to state what my own personal opinions are, because they are on record. As a member of Lord Hartington's Commission, I dissented from my colleagues in regard to one point, and I expressed in my dissentient Report my own opinions in very plain terms. I retain the opinions I then expressed, and, being in office, I shall be glad, if the opportunity arises, to carry them into effect. But the Hartington Commission did not speak of the immediate adoption of its proposals; it contemplated an interval, because it did not wish in any way to disturb existing arrangements so long as we have the advantage of the services of the present Commander-in-Chief. Therefore, I will observe and watch the working of the present system of the War Office with a perfectly open mind, and a mind favourable in the main to the views expressed by the hon. and gallant Gentleman, and certainly to the conclusions of the Hartington Commission. But the present division of responsibility, having been made so recently by my predecessor, and apparently working

smoothly and well—I do not say it is the best arrangement that could be made, but at all events it works for the present smoothly and well—I do not think I should be justified, whatever my opinions may be, in proposing any change until an opportunity arises for dealing on a larger scale with the whole question. The most important point of all brought before the Hartington Commission was the then existing want of harmony between the Admiralty and the War Office. I am glad to corroborate what the right hon. Gentleman opposite has said—that that want of harmony has almost entirely disappeared; that the great questions affecting the defence of these shores and the possessions of the Crown in different parts of the world have been, and are being, settled by the joint counsel of the best officers of both Departments, and that there is really none of that friction which used to be attributed to the two Departments, whether it ever existed to the alleged extent or not. The noble Lord (Viscount Wolmer) dealt largely with the Report of Lord Wantage's Committee. That Report has been discussed again and again in this House, although the noble Lord may not have been present, and there has not been a single passage quoted to-night which I have not heard quoted before. When the hon. and gallant Gentleman opposite said that the late Government, if it had remained in power, would have adopted a number of recommendations made by the Committee, my answer is that the Report was made in January of last year; the late Government considered nearly all the recommendations; they formed, I will not say a conclusive judgment upon them, but at all events a first opinion, which they handed over to me, and I have, so far as I have gone, fully confirmed and adopted all the conclusions they arrived at. I hope the noble Lord the Member for Edinburgh will not object to my criticising himself and his colleagues or Lord Wantage's Committee; but I must say that the Committee did not cover all the ground that they ought to have covered, because they omitted from their consideration the important element of expense. They neglected to inquire what the cost of their recommendations would be, and the result is that from a Paper laid on the

*Mr. Campbell-Bannerman*

Table of the House last summer it appears that the total charge of those recommendations, if they had all been adopted, would have been £2,000,000 sterling. That is a reason which should make us pause in accepting wholesale the recommendations of the Committee. The noble Lord quoted some strong observations made by Lord Wolseley and other authorities on the subject of Army Corps. Lord Wolseley is often apt to use strong expressions, but I can quote other expressions of Lord Wolseley which form a complete answer to those quoted by the noble Lord. Lord Wolseley has said with regard to the Infantry—

“I do not know a single battalion outside the Guards fit to go into the field and fight against any European nation. But that is not necessary, provided that a thoroughly efficient reserve of 80,000 men is maintained. It is not the object to have all the battalions at home ready to go on active service. That would mean an Army without a reserve. I should call such an Army a theoretical Army, such as we had before the Crimean War.”

Again, Sir Evelyn Wood said that the present system was the most satisfactory solution of a difficult problem, and infinitely superior to any system of dépôt. The noble Lord said one would have to put the whole of the Reserve into the first line of defence. What is the Reserve for but for that purpose? That is what continental nations do, and that is what we have always intended to do. The noble Lord quoted the opinion of Sir Redvers Buller, that there is not enough Reserve to feed two Army Corps. I think it is well to be frank on this subject, and to adhere to the opinions I have often expressed. Before I came into Office I frequently said at the other side of the Table, that I was no believer in Army Corps. What do we want two Army Corps in this country for? Surely not for foreign service. Who is going to send two Army Corps to the Continent? Is there any man in the House who would think of sending an Army Corps on the Continent to engage in a Continental war with one of the great European nations? Such a possibility I dismiss from my mind altogether. What we want our Army for is to garrison India and the Colonies, to defend the shores of this country, and to supply those small special expeditions

which are from time to time sent out to the small wars, in which, unfortunately, we are often engaged. The right hon. Baronet the Member for the Forest of Dean, in his belligerent speech, complained that there are no trained Generals in this country, and no great military manœuvres at which they could be trained, as there are on the Continent. He said, "Why have we not great manœuvres?" Has my right hon. Friend forgotten that the enclosed nature of this country, cut up into small fields with hedges and ditches, precluded manœuvres on a large scale? ["Oh!"] I say you cannot pass great bodies of troops over them without doing considerable damage to the owners and occupiers of property, which the country would not stand for one moment. ["Oh, oh!"] Hon. Members said "Oh, oh!" but I am well acquainted with the matter, because I was in the War Office when we had great manœuvres on Dartmoor, Cannock Chase, and Salisbury Plain, which are the only places in this country where manœuvres to any considerable extent can be held. When hon. Members complain that we have no great manœuvres, the reply is that this country does not require that sort of experience which is necessary in the case of European countries possessing a co-terminous frontier, and which must be always in a state of readiness, with Army Corps fully equipped to meet any sudden emergency, with trained Generals, and with all the advantages for manœuvres which we in this country do not possess. But these are not required for our purposes. I would warn the House against being the slave of the Army Corps system, although it is useful as a standard up to which we should work. As to the recommendations of Lord Wantage's Committee, it is, I think, better to reserve my statement as to what I propose to do as regards pay and clothing until we get into Committee. We are asked to give a free ration and to put a stop to the messing stoppage. But does the House know what this would cost the country? It would entail an extra expense on this country of £667,200, and in India of over £313,000, together nearly £1,000,000. I do not deny that it would be a good thing to do this, if it were feasible; but it is not right to say that recruits are deceived as to the con-

ditions of service, and are under the impression that there are no stoppages of pay. Since January 1 of last year every recruit is asked, "What led you to make up your mind to enter the Army?" In more than one-half the cases the answer was "The posters," and on those Army posters it is distinctly stated that the rations are bread and meat, and that a deduction is made for groceries and other articles of that kind. It cannot, therefore, be said for one moment that any deception takes place now, though it may have been in the old days. Hon. and gallant Members, who know the British soldier, will agree with me in saying that he is prone, when asked what induced him to enlist, to put such a construction on the terms as to lead to the impression that he believes that he has been misled. I do not think I need delay the House any longer, especially as the Leader of the Opposition is anxious to close the Debate. I have said enough to show why we cannot be precipitate in adopting the recommendations of Lord Wantage's Committee; but I assure the House that I am most ready to adopt any suggestion, either as to the administration and organisation of the War Office itself, as to the treatment of the soldiers, or as to any other measure which is likely to improve the efficiency of the Army. That is the only object I and those who work with me have in view. We have no preconceived opinions or prejudices, or, if we have, we will not allow them to stand in the way. I thank the many hon. Members for making suggestions, which, though they may not be at once accepted, may be found more practicable in the future.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Debate be now adjourned."—  
(*Major Rasch.*)

MR. W. E. GLADSTONE: I think the Debate, which has been of great interest and conducted with much ability, is a Debate which might now fairly be brought to a close. There has been a full expression of opinion, and I certainly must take the sense of the House.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: The right hon. Gentleman has not been in the House, and I do not know that it is necessary he should have been, but I may inform him that only two military



men have spoken. [*A Ministerial cry: "Quite enough."*] Some hon. Member says "Quite enough," but I suppose military men may be supposed to have some title to speak on a matter affecting the Army. Not only have only two military men spoken, but the total number of speakers has not exceeded five or six in the course of the whole evening. The speeches have been prolonged, but they have certainly not been unimportant, and the matter contained in those speeches could not well have been compressed into a shorter space. I think we have some right to complain of the action of the Government already. Pledges of a clear kind were given at question time, and those pledges have been broken. Under these circumstances, I do not think the Government should endeavour to exclude from taking part in this Debate on a very important question affecting the Army—the greatest, as far as I know, of the last five years—hon. Gentlemen who have a perfect title to speak.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Sir W. HARCOURT, Derby): I do not think the right hon. Gentleman has entirely appreciated what the point was that the Leader of the House suggested—namely, that we should conclude only the Debate on the Motion of the noble Lord the Member for Edinburgh. But that does not conclude the whole Debates upon the military question. That does not exclude military gentlemen, Members of this House whom we always hear with the greatest respect, from calling attention to questions relating to the Army. All that we ask is that the Amendment should be disposed of, leaving the rest of the discussion on Army Estimates open to the House. I confess I do not think the House will regard that as an unreasonable proposal.

Question put.

The House divided:—Ayes 167; Noes 225.—(Division List, No. 26.)

Original Question proposed.

Dr. FARQUHARSON rose in his place, and claimed to move, "That the Question be now put."

\*MR. SPEAKER: I think it reasonable, after the Debate that has taken place, that the Question may be  
*Mr. A. J. Ralfour*

now put, but only on the first Question—the Motion of the noble Lord—not upon the whole Question, that I now leave the Chair.

Question, "That the Question be now put," put, and agreed to.

Question, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question," put accordingly, and agreed to.

Main Question again proposed.

Debate adjourned till To-morrow at Two of the clock.

#### RAILWAY SERVANTS (HOURS OF LABOUR) BILL.—(No. 165.)

Order for Committee read, and discharged.

Bill committed to the Standing Committee on Trade, Shipping, and Manufactures.

#### CHOLERA HOSPITALS (IRELAND) BILL.—(No. 245.)

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Clause 1.

Committee report Progress; to sit again upon Monday next.

#### PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO CHILDREN BILL.—(No. 134.)

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Clause 1.

Committee report Progress; to sit again upon Monday next.

#### DAY INDUSTRIAL SCHOOLS (SCOTLAND) [EXPENSES.]

Committee to consider of authorising the payment, out of moneys to be provided by Parliament, of contributions towards the expenses of children sent to Day Industrial Schools in pursuance of any Act of the present Session to make provision for the establishment of Day Industrial Schools in Scotland, and to amend the Education (Scotland) Acts, 1872 and 1883 (Queen's Recommendation signified), this day, at Two of the o'clock.—(*Sir John Lubbert.*)

House adjourned at twenty-five minutes after One o'clock.

## HOUSE OF LORDS,

*Friday, 10th March 1893.*

The Lord Lovelace—Took the Oath.

## INFECTIOUS HOSPITALS BILL. [H.L.]

## SECOND READING.

Order of the Day for the Second Reading, read.

LORD THRING said, he brought this Bill forward at the instance of the County Councils Association, a Body representing 51 out of the 61 counties of England, a population of 16,000,000, and a rateable value of £88,000,000. It must necessarily interest the House as the best means, he believed, for preventing some of the most virulent and destructive diseases afflicting mankind. Though doctors differed in many things, they were agreed that isolation was the only effective protection against infectious diseases. Even in their Lordships' own houses isolation was no easy thing—one or two cases they might be able to isolate, but in poor men's dwellings—even of two or three rooms in the case of the better class of artisans in the larger towns—that was impossible, and it was a miracle if the disease did not spread through the house. Nay, the very charity of the poor increased the danger by their going to assist neighbours, and carrying back with them the seeds of disease, so that a disorder which might have been easily checked at first would spread and destroy a whole town. Isolation hospitals were essential, for by no other means could isolation be produced. At whose expense were they to be built? Modern legislation had replied, in the case of London, in no doubtful voice, that isolation was a public and not a private benefit. If a man broke his leg, he was carried to the hospital for his own benefit; but if he had scarlet fever, or, still worse, small-pox, his removal to the hospital was not so much for his own benefit as for that of the community, and his isolation was, therefore, to the public advantage. The expense ought, therefore, to

be borne by the community, for the necessity of isolation hospitals was as great as that of the supply of water, gas, or any other requisite. By the present law sanitary or urban sanitary districts might establish isolation hospitals, but only 400 out of 1,500 such authorities had made adequate provision for them. To some extent, that might be due to the apathy of the Local Authorities, who were slow to move and very much afraid of increasing the rates. But the fact was, that the division of the country into sanitary and urban sanitary districts, though apparently a systematic arrangement, was perhaps the most perplexing that had ever puzzled an inquirer. Urban Sanitary Authorities contained towns from the size of Manchester to places of 500, and sometimes fewer, inhabitants. Sanitary Authorities, again, were the residue of Unions after taking out of them the Urban Sanitary Authorities. They even consisted of scattered parishes having little communication with each other, and being little able to combine. That being the case, the first object of this Bill was to further the protective system of combination; to enable County Councils to combine parishes or Rural Sanitary Authorities, or indeed any rating authorities, and to remove the difficulty of their unequal aptitude for combination. Another difficulty lay in the selection of sites. Learned persons had stated that some 40 ft. of space was sufficient to prevent the spread of contagion in all diseases except small-pox; but however that might be, people had a terror of having isolation hospitals near them. The two great factors in the question were the combination of appropriate districts and the selection of sites, and they had been found almost insuperable. Dr. Seton, the medical officer of Surrey, had informed him that one bed to 1,000 people was the requisite number, and that the ideal hospital would contain some 30 beds to a population of 30,000. Such an arrangement was unfitted for sparsely-populated places, and medical men were of opinion that village hospitals might be sometimes substituted, the arrangements being made in every case in reference to the local peculiarities of the place. That this Bill would effect, through the medium of the County Councils, giving the necessary flexibility for the combination of the small areas, either

sanitary districts or parishes. The safeguard against unjust combination would be an appeal to the Local Government Board, which might take out of the combination any place possessing a proper hospital or giving a just reason for objecting. A Governing Body would be formed for the hospital district; and there, again, the Local Government Board might be appealed to if any of the constituent areas thought they had been unjustly treated. County Councils might exercise this power of forming a hospital district on the application of 25 ratepayers, and they might even, if they thought fit, direct their medical officers to make inquiries as to the necessity for a public hospital in a particular locality, and might thereupon form a hospital district subject always to an appeal to the Local Government Board, so as to entirely prevent any injustice. When the hospital district was formed and the Governing Body constituted, either from members of the Local Authorities or by the County Council and the Local Authorities with it, the system would begin to work. They would then have every power, including that of buying land. But that, again, was fettered, for they had only the same power of buying land as they had under the Public Health Acts—they might buy it by agreement; but if they wanted to purchase it compulsorily, they must have a Provisional Order. Then they must be provided with ambulances, and put in communication with the system of telegraphs. This, also, was on the recommendation of the medical men, who said that patients could be easily removed five or six miles by ambulance, and in many cases even a much greater distance. Being a public benefit, the expense of the hospitals was to be borne, as in the case of London, entirely by the public. As a patient was removed for the benefit of the community and not for his own, be he rich or poor, he was entitled to relief gratuitously in the infectious hospitals; but of course it was expected, as in all hospitals now, that rich patients would contribute to the funds, and the hospitals might, if they chose, provide separate rooms for those who could afford to pay for them. In small areas in the hospital district the hospitals would be built at the public expense according to the rateable value of the constituent areas, but the establishment expenses

would be paid according to the population of the various areas. The patients' expenses would be paid out of the sanitary district. A subsidiary power was given to provide nurses. Trained nurses were essential, and, as their Lordships were aware, many hospitals not only trained nurses themselves, but obtained funds by sending them out to private persons, and power was given for that purpose. This was not an ambitious Bill; and while it did not pretend to make any great change, it would be productive of great good. The counties had been zealous in carrying into effect the medical education provisions, and would, he believed, if power were given them, show equal alacrity in undertaking this difficult and important subject of the establishment of isolation hospitals. There could not be a graver object for the counties to undertake than to prevent, if possible, an invasion of infectious diseases; and even if they were unsuccessful in attaining that result, at all events they would palliate those evils.

Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2<sup>a</sup>."  
—(*The Lord Thring*.)

LORD MONKSWELL said that the provisions of the Bill had received from the Local Government Board the attention due to the importance of the subject dealt with, to the high authority of the noble and learned Lord who had introduced it, and to the vast body of representative opinion at the back of it. The Local Government Board was thoroughly in accord with the object sought to be attained by this Bill—namely, the provision of increased accommodation for the isolation of infectious disease. There could be no doubt that there were many sanitary districts, both urban and rural, which were without the hospitals with which they ought to be provided, and at times it happened that persons, not paupers, who were suffering from infectious diseases, were taken to the workhouse infirmaries as being the only places in which they could be treated. That was an illegal and thoroughly objectionable arrangement. The view, therefore, of the Local Government Board was that the present law, under which it was optional for Sanitary Authorities to provide hospital accommodation for infectious cases, was defective, and that further provision should be made for

such accommodation, and the Board was of opinion that some powers with this object should be conferred on County Councils. Consequently, the Board welcomed this Bill as an endeavour to deal with a pressing evil on sound principles, and invited the House to give it a Second Reading. The Local Government Board was not, however, satisfied that the provisions of the Bill were in all respects the best that could be adopted to secure the end in view. So far as the Bill proposed that petitions should be made to the County Councils by Sanitary Authorities for the establishment of hospitals for their districts, no provision would seem to be needed, for there would appear to be no reason why a Sanitary Authority which had already, under the Public Health Act, 1875, full power to provide hospital accommodation for its district, should apply to the County Councils to provide it for that district, and at the same time—for that was the proposal in the Bill—to set up a separate Body to have control of the hospital and to charge the expenses to the Sanitary Authority. In such cases the Sanitary Authorities, if they wished to move in the matter at all, would probably prefer to act under the powers they now possessed rather than to place themselves under the control of the County Councils. With regard to the proposals in the Bill for the formation of hospital districts, as the law now stood, united districts could be formed by Provisional Order for hospital purposes; but, practically, such districts could only be formed when the Sanitary Authorities of all the districts concerned were willing to contribute. Several united districts had, however, been formed. The powers given to County Councils by this Bill would no doubt facilitate the formation of hospital districts. As to those cases where the Sanitary Authorities, being desirous of having a hospital district carved out, would be obliged to approach the County Council instead of proceeding under the powers they now possessed, the Local Government Board entertained some doubt whether it would be well to let Sanitary Authorities throw upon the County Council the task—often a difficult one—of providing a hospital merely by asking that a hospital district might be formed. The Board suggested that it might be better to follow the lines of

other legislation on subjects in which both County Councils and Sanitary Authorities were concerned, and to empower the County Council to provide a hospital where the Sanitary Authority made default in doing its duty in this matter. It might be provided that where the County Council dealt with a complaint that a Sanitary Authority had made such default, the Council might take into account the circumstances of the neighbouring districts as regarded hospital accommodation, and, if necessary, form a district to contain two or more sanitary districts or contributory places. He hoped the Bill, with such amendments as might be considered desirable, would pass into law, and he was sure the country and the House were much indebted to his noble and learned Friend for introducing and drafting it.

Motion agreed to; Bill read 2<sup>a</sup> accordingly, and committed to a Committee of the Whole House.

#### CONDITION OF THE NAVY.

##### OBSERVATIONS.

LORD BRASSEY called attention to the state of the Navy in relation to ships building and the resources for manning the Fleet. He said that those who had had the privilege of serving at the Admiralty must always watch with interest the work of that important Department; and, as their Lordships had the advantage of the presence of the First Lord in that House, he hoped that, in raising a discussion with reference to the Navy, he might command their Lordships' approval. The two points with which he desired to deal were shipbuilding and manning. The Navy Estimates for 1893-94 provided for shipbuilding a total of £4,621,774. From the close approximation of those figures to the figures for 1892-93, it was evident that Earl Spencer adhered, in the main, to the policy of his predecessors. In protecting the great Department over which he presided from a premature reduction of Estimates the noble Earl had done a public service. The late Board had thought it desirable to submit to Parliament a programme of construction extending over a period of five years. That course had not been followed by the present Board. It was most

desirable that a continuous policy should be pursued in relation to the Navy. There were, no doubt, objections—he did not say insuperable objections—to fixing a programme by embodying in an Act of Parliament proposals which fettered the discretion of future Administrations. The necessity for sustained efforts in the direction of large expenditure on shipbuilding on our part had been created by the action taken by other Powers, not dependent in an equal degree with ourselves upon a Navy for protection from invasion and for the security of their trade and food supplies. The expenditure of France in the construction of new ships had averaged for the last three years £2,800,000. It was officially stated that an increased expenditure must be looked for in the future. The expenditure of Russia on shipbuilding had been rapidly increasing, and was only a fraction less than that of France. For the present year it stood at £2,674,000. It was laid down by Lord George Hamilton, with the approval of Parliament, that the standard of strength at which the Navy of England ought to be maintained was that of equality to a combination of any two other Powers. The combined expenditure of France and Russia being some £5,500,000, the Board of Admiralty would not have been warranted in proposing a less sum for shipbuilding than that proposed in the Estimates now before Parliament. Certainly our naval preparations were not in that state of advancement which could alone have justified us in resting on our oars, while other Powers were making great efforts to push forward the reinforcement of their Fleets. Comparing our strength in ships, built and building, with the combined strength of France and Russia, our relative position might be briefly summarised. In first-class battle-ships we had an advantage over those two Powers combined, though not more than was sufficient to give protection to our enormous maritime interests. In second-class battle-ships we had a sensible inferiority both in number and tonnage. In the French list, however, were included seven ships built of wood, of which the oldest was launched in 1865. In our defence we were weak; but the ships of that class under the flags of foreign Powers were for the most part

not of a type capable of keeping the sea, or to engage in offensive operations against an enemy's coasts. In the most important and powerful type—namely, cruisers of the new armoured class, we greatly needed reinforcement. In the protected classes the efforts lately put forth had placed us in a good position. Having dealt with expenditure, they had now to consider the several types of ships in the new programme. The list included two first-class battle-ships, to be named the *Magnificent* and the *Majestic*, one somewhat smaller first-class ship, the *Renown*, two first-class cruisers, three second-class cruisers, two sloops, and 14 torpedo-boat destroyers. The *Renown*, the only battle-ship already laid down by the present Admiralty, was designed as an improvement on the two smaller first-class battle-ships *Centurion* and *Barfleur*, laid down by the late Board. In the new vessel the displacement was increased from 10,500 to 12,250 tons. The guns were more fully protected. To obtain this protection it might have been better to reduce the number of guns rather than increase the size and cost of the ship. The two battle-ships which the Admiralty proposed to commence in the Dockyards were of the *Royal Sovereign* type—of which eight were laid down under the late Board. The *Royal Sovereign* type was highly approved in the Navy. There were cogent arguments against throwing all our resources into the construction of ships, displacing more than 14,000 tons, and which, with their armament, would cost in round figures £1,000,000 sterling. The two new ships were to be still larger and more costly than their predecessors. Increase of dimensions enabled the naval architect to give more armour, more armament, more speed, more coal capacity. With every addition to tonnage, we suffered increasingly the disadvantage of having too many eggs in one basket. The gun, the ram, and the torpedo were the weapons of naval warfare. Hugeness of size did not secure invulnerability even from projectiles, and certainly it gave no advantage, but rather the contrary, whether for dealing or avoiding a blow with the ram or the torpedo. It increased rather than lessened the risk of a disaster such as that which had befallen the *Howe*. If we looked to the ship-

building policy of other Powers, we found that the French had with great reluctance followed us in adding to dimensions. Their ships of the *Hoche* type, the contemporaries of our own *Admiral* class, did not exceed that class in tonnage. When we advanced from the 10,600 tons of the *Admirals* to the 14,150 tons of our latest first-class ships, France laid down three ships of 11,800 tons. These three ships had since been followed by two ships of approximately similar tonnage, the *Bouvet* and *Massena*. Russia had one ship building of over 12,000 tons; with that exception, all the battle-ships building for Russia and Germany were, as regarded their largest ironclads, below 11,000 tons. In Italy, where for a long period the largest class of ships were in favour, it had now been decided to build no more monster ships, but to lay down in lieu of them such vessels as the *Admiral San Bon*, of 9,800 tons, of great speed, specially adapted to the Mediterranean. No less than eight vessels of the *Royal Sovereign* type having recently been built by us, it would have been preferable on many grounds that they should have been followed up by vessels of more moderate dimensions. Passing from shipbuilding to reconstruction and repair, the programme included nine ships which it was well worth while to take in hand. The hulls being in perfect condition, it was much to be regretted that the opportunity should not have been used for supplying to all these vessels powerful engines of modern pattern when they were taken in hand for a thorough re-fit. Although our older ships might no longer be fit for the line of battle, they were not obsolete as cruisers, especially for the defence of the trade east of the Cape, leading to India, to China, to the farthest East, and Australasia. It was not likely that the newest ships of a hostile Power would be found in those distant waters. With improved machinery, long vessels such as the *Agincourt*, *Achilles*, and the *Northumberland* would steam 16 knots. For service as cruisers, their heavy muzzle-loaders should be removed and replaced with light breech-loading guns. The change would give more disposable weight for coal supply, and allow of a reduction in the complements. The latter was a most important

consideration, having in view the nature of the duties for which the ships would be most available, not as battle-ships, but as cruisers. Turning to the cruiser-class, special attention was now being given in foreign Navies to an armoured type which it was difficult to differentiate from the battle-ships. For many years Russia had been leading the way in building this new and powerful class of armoured cruisers. The *Rurik*, now approaching completion, had a displacement of 11,000 tons, a speed of 18 knots, and was well protected by armour. Three ships of the *Rurik* type were in progress for the Russian Navy. The French had already built one similar cruiser. They were completing another, and were laying down two more ships, considerably smaller in tonnage than the *Rurik*, but similarly protected. Two ships of the *Rurik* class and five smaller ships of 7,000 tons were in course of construction for Spain, and the type was represented in the United States Navy by the *New York* and the *Brooklyn*. With these remarkable developments abroad in the power of cutting up commerce, the Admiralty was well-advised in building vessels capable of meeting the cruisers built and in hand for foreign Navies, and for which at present the British Navy had no match. It was promised that the two new first-class cruisers were to surpass in speed, coal supply, armament, and armour any cruisers built or building; but ships of this class were so extremely valuable and so urgently necessary, that it was a question whether two more vessels of the same powerful type might not with advantage have been substituted for one of the new first-class battle-ships. The laying-down programme included, in addition to the first-class cruisers, three second-class ships of 5,500 tons, which were to be improvements on the *Astræa* class. These new vessels would be nearly 2,000 tons larger than the first batch of second-class cruisers laid down by the late Board. All the ships lately built for the Navy as cruisers were valuable additions; but it was certain that for the duties of ocean cruisers the larger protected ships of the Hamilton programme were relatively the most efficient, whether they looked to speed, to protection, or to coal endurance, or ability to keep the sea. One feature in the new second-class cruisers he must criticise.

In the improved *Astræa* the coal capacity was increased from 400 to 500 tons. On a displacement of 5,500 tons, it was most desirable, and it should be possible, to carry a more ample supply. In this connection it seemed to be appropriate to refer to the policy of subsidising merchant cruisers. At a time when foreign Powers were giving encouragement with a lavish hand to the construction of fast steamers, the support of the State could not safely be withdrawn from those British ship-owners who were prepared to build vessels of a type suitable for conversion into cruisers. No merchant steamer could be a match for a regularly-built vessel of war; but if the contingency of war were more carefully considered in the original designs, much might be done to improve the means of protection. If deficient in protection, the merchant cruisers had a great superiority in speed over the majority of war-vessels. He need not trouble their Lordships with detailed observations on the torpedo flotilla. The Admiralty had wisely decided to meet torpedo-boat attacks with torpedo-boat destroyers. They had been well-advised in not yielding to the demand for a great increase in torpedo-boats. Having dealt with the shipbuilding programme, it became necessary to examine our resources for manning the Fleet. The energy recently directed to the construction of vessels involved a large addition to the seamen and Marines. The effective ships now on the *Navy List* would probably require not less than 100,000 men. He should be glad to know the exact figures from the First Lord of the Admiralty—how many men were actually available. Provision was made in the Navy Estimates for 70,493 available for sea service. Behind them were 3,010 in the Seamen and Marine Pensioners' Reserve. The Royal Navy Reserve had a strength of 1,100 officers and 20,900 men, nearly equally divided between the first- and second-class. In addition to the seamen, they had 1,200 firemen. It would be seen that we were barely able to man all the ships on the effective list, and there were no reserves to make good the loss by wastage which in time of war was sure to be constant and large. On the other hand, the numbers of the men were in excess of our peace requirements, and our facilities for

their training at sea. In the last 10 years they had added more than 15,000 men to the permanent force and had increased the Votes for wages and victualling by £1,266,000 a year. If the present policy in relation to the manning of the Navy was pursued, it was evident that a burden would be laid on the taxpayers only to be justified by imperative necessity. He could not recognise that there was any such necessity. They might safely place more confidence than hitherto in the Mercantile Marine as a second line of defence standing behind the Navy. There was no reason to doubt a Reserve could be brought to any necessary standard of efficiency by sufficient training and drill. As to the loyalty of the men to their engagements if called upon to serve, Sir George Tryon's Committee had expressed the fullest confidence. These considerations pointed clearly to a reinforcement of the Royal Naval Reserve. Under the Act of 1859 the Admiralty were empowered to raise 30,000 men. A Reserve of 1,000 officers, 12,500 seamen in the first-class, 12,500 in the second-class, and 5,000 firemen was the smallest force with which they should be satisfied. There would be no difficulty in raising the strength of the Naval Reserve. As estimated by Sir George Tryon's Committee, they had in the Merchant Service approximately 40,000 men eligible for the First-Class Reserve, and 70,000 men regularly, and 40,000 others occasionally, engaged in the fishing industry. No fewer than 24,000 men were employed as firemen and trimmers. In dealing with the manning of our own Navy, their Lordships might with advantage take into view the systems long established and successfully worked in other countries, and especially in France. The British was the only Navy whose ships were completely manned with seamen trained for the Service from boyhood and engaged for a long term of years. In France, out of a total force actually embarked in the ships in commission, 25,000 were entered as full-grown men from the *Inscription Maritime*. The seamen gunners, torpedo-men, engine-room artificers, and firemen were obtained for the French Navy by voluntary enlistment. The special ratings formed, perhaps, a quarter of the total ships' complements. For the general duties of a man-of-war's man, French

naval officers were well satisfied with the efficiency of the men obtained from the Inscription Maritime, and it was estimated that 100,000 able-bodied seafaring men could be supplied as a reserve to the Fleet from that source. In England, where naval and military service was voluntary, pay and retainers must necessarily be fixed on a liberal scale. In all other respects the organisation of the French Inscription Maritime might be studied in this country with good effect. If he had trespassed upon the patience of the House at some length upon this part of the subject, he might urge that the manning of the Navy more largely from the Reserve was just one of those questions in which a civilian might interpose with advantage. Among the officers of the Navy there was a natural preference for the well-drilled and disciplined force, which the continuous service system placed in their hands. It was the part of the statesman to appreciate how serious was the waste of public money and how yet more grievous the waste of valuable human energy which was inevitable in attempting to maintain our men in peace at the full numbers required in time of war. They should look more confidently to the Reserves which the Mercantile Marine could supply for the Navy in the emergency of war.

\***LORD SUDELEY** said, the question brought before the House was of the greatest interest and importance to the country. The noble Lord who had just spoken had dwelt very fully upon the question of the larger battle-ships, and on that subject had gone so much into detail and was so great an authority that he would not weary their Lordships by going further into the matter. He could not, however, agree with him that it was desirable to build a smaller class of battle-ships unless we had individual ships amongst our own battle-ships equal to individual ships of foreign nations. Our ships must be of equal size to those they had to fight against, and it would not do in any case for England to have battle-ships which would have to run away from an enemy's ship. If they took the unwritten law which Cobden once laid down, and now agreed to by all the principal authorities, that our Navy should be equal in efficiency to cope with the Navy of any two countries, especially with the Navies of France and Russia combined, he thought that, on the whole,

the last few years had enabled them to get into a satisfactory state, as far as our great fighting ships were concerned. He found that the money spent in shipbuilding from the year 1885 to 1892 was about £27,000,000, whereas in the previous 14 years it was only £22,000,000. Thus they had built vessels during the last seven years at the rate of £3,500,000, and in the previous 14 years only at the rate of £1,500,000. This was really very satisfactory, and showed that, of late years we had awakened to the fact that our Navy had gone down, and that steps had been taken in earnest to maintain it in a state of efficiency as regarded other nations. That large expenditure was a true measure of what had been done. What they had to do, however, was to keep up the shipbuilding programme to what was being expended in foreign countries. His noble Friend had alluded to the amount France and Russia were spending this year—France nearly £3,000,000 and Russia over £2,500,000, together the enormous amount of £5,500,000. Now, this great increase in shipbuilding which Russia had made during the last few years was a very serious matter and could not be overlooked. Notwithstanding England was spending so much larger an amount than she used to do, in the face of what Russia and France were doing England must at once take steps to still further increase the Navy. It was all very well to say that the amount they were expending was very large, but if France and Russia were doing more, however much they disliked it, it was quite evident they must follow their footsteps. They must keep a steady eye on that policy, and not on any consideration whatever allow France and Russia to go ahead of them and possess larger Fleets. He was very glad to see that in the Estimates steps were being taken to maintain their superiority, though he wished very much indeed that he could see that some special steps had been taken to replace the *Howe*, as that ship must either be lost or, at any rate, would have to be practically rebuilt. His noble Friend had paid a right and proper compliment to his noble Friend at the head of the Admiralty for not having been induced in any way to recede or make any reduction from the Estimates. He fully concurred with what he had said on this subject. He thought it would have



been a disastrous thing in every way if the Navy had once again become a question of Party warfare or Party politics, and that the Chancellor of the Exchequer should have been allowed to improve his Budget at the expense of that great Service, on which the power of this country so much depended. Sir John Colomb, in the House of Commons, defined the position of this country in a very graphic remark, which seemed to him admirably to state the case. He said—

“We were an unvictualled ocean citadel, of whose inhabitants 30,000,000 are dependent for their livelihood on manufactures, the raw materials of which are brought to us from abroad.”

That very aptly described our position. When they considered this, and when they remembered what might happen to Great Britain if her ports were closed only for a few days, there could be no question that anything which would tend to diminish the efficiency of the Navy would be one of the most false economy and one which would redound to the discredit of those who carried it out. The subject that he wished specially to bring before their Lordships' notice was the question whether they had anything like a proper number of modern protected and belted cruisers for the protection of our maritime interests, which were far greater than those of any other Power. He thought it was right that he should explain that the numbers and statistics of ships which he was about to refer to he had taken from Lord Brassey's *Naval Annual*; but he had somewhat altered the way in which they were there placed, as he had taken in two categories cruisers above 4,000 tons and cruisers below 4,000 tons. In the first list he had added to Lord Brassey's first-class protected cruisers the *Astræas*, *Merseys* (belted cruisers), the *Impérieuse*, *Warspite*, and the *Talbots*, and he had excluded the older ironclads which he hardly thought ought to be classed as cruisers below 4,000 tons, including the *Latona*, *Pallas*, the Australian ships, and the *Medeas*. There were so many other different ways of classifying these modern cruisers that he trusted there might be no confusion if he looked upon those ships over 4,000 tons as cruisers of the first-class belonging to the home and European waters, rather than those under 4,000, which

might be looked upon as ships necessary to protect our maritime interests abroad. In all the cruisers he had referred to he alluded to the modern protected cruisers with considerable speed, and not, of course, to the old smaller cruisers, which were more for peace time than for war. Now, in considering this question they had two subjects to look at—first, had we sufficient of the larger cruisers to enable us to hold our proper position of being able to cope with both France and Russia at the same time in the ordinary European battle-ground of naval warfare? secondly, whether, over and above this, we had sufficient of the smaller class to protect our great maritime interests throughout the world? Under both these heads they must consider, also, whether they had amongst these cruisers vessels of equal size to meet any which might be built by foreign countries, or whether they had allowed other countries to build vessels larger and more competent than ours. Now, in regard to the first question, he found that, taking the protected and belted cruisers about and above 4,000 tons, broadly speaking—and in these matters it was necessary to speak in a broad and large way—England was at present very fairly placed, and, so far as numbers were concerned, and general efficiency, great credit was due to the past Administration, and to what was being done by the present Board of Admiralty, to maintain the superiority. This country of plated and belted cruisers, taking the classification he had stated, had 37. Against this France had 15 and Russia 10, total 25. As to the power of individual ships to compete with each other, there was one point, however, which deserved special attention. This was the fact that we had allowed ourselves to be somewhat outwitted, and Russia had now got a cruiser afloat, the *Rurik*, which was superior in every way to any cruiser England could bring against her; and she had two more such ships actually building. Spain was also building three such vessels, and the United States were building two. This was a subject of the utmost importance, which deserved to be pressed home on the Admiralty, and they should be asked to give their implicit promise that they would do their utmost to overtake this increase in efficiency in this one indi-

vidual class. Now for one moment to glance at what the *Rurik* was. He found that the *Rurik* carried no less than 2,000 tons of coal, against the *Blake*, a similar vessel in the English Navy, carrying only 1,500 tons; that she had a speed at sea, at natural draught, of 19 to 20 knots, as against about  $17\frac{1}{2}$  to  $18\frac{1}{2}$  of the *Blake*. As to the armament, the *Rurik* carried four 8-inch guns, 16 6-inch, six 4·7-inch; the *Blake* carried two 9-inch guns, 10 6-inch. It was true the *Rurik* had cost no less than £800,000, whereas the largest English cruisers, the *Blake* had cost £400,000, which pretty well explained the position. He hoped his noble Friend the First Lord, when he spoke on this subject, would be able to say that the three vessels which the Admiralty were to lay down would compare favourably with those ships, or at any rate that special steps were to be taken in order to enable England to maintain her superiority. In our present position if one of those *Ruriks* were to meet one of our *Blakes*, the unfortunate *Blakes* would be unable to get away if they wished, going from one and a half to two knots slower and with a smaller armament. No doubt they would make a very hard fight of it, but it would not be a very equal contest. We could not afford to allow either Russia or France to build vessels of this type and have such terribly powerful cruisers afloat in time of war with nothing whatever to cope with them. If the *Blake* class were to meet such vessels, it was clear the fight would be very unequal. In the number of smaller cruisers to protect our maritime interests we were very far below what we ought to be. We had, about and below 4,000 tons, some 39 vessels. Against this we had to meet in French ships 18, Russian two—together 20. This number was altogether inadequate for the protection of our maritime interests. It had been clearly laid down by Sir Geoffrey Hornby and many other authorities that as coal is the limit of our power, so we must have in all calculations one-third more than our requirements to make up for vessels that are coaling or which have gone to fill up. In the present day blockades would be far more difficult under steam than in the old days of sail. A blockade could not be maintained without a very large amount of coal, and it would be far more difficult

to prevent an enemy putting to sea. The danger of steamers preying on our commerce was brought in recent years very prominently forward by the *Alabama*. There was also no doubt that, owing to the directness of the routes which steamers now take, it would be most easy to cut them off on their route. No definite opinion had been given as to how many cruisers would be necessary in time of war to protect our commerce, but at least 100 would certainly be required. A few years ago a statement was made by Sir Geoffrey Hornby that whereas in 1794 we had 185 cruisers, though that included all sorts of vessels, irrespective of fireships and bombs, we ought to have at least 200 now. He pointed out that for the requirements alone of what may be called the home districts and fleet at least 42 would be wanted; but looking at our enormous trade throughout the world and all our distant stations, in time of war at least another 100 would be required. When 42 was spoken of as being the number of smaller cruisers which we now have for this class of work below 4,000 tons, it included all such vessels, with no reserve for loss and accidents in time of war. We could not make armed merchant vessels of use in this respect. They were not meant for fighting vessels, and his noble Friend's remark that they might take the place of armed cruisers was an entirely misleading statement. They were intended for carrying information at great speed, and no ironclad squadrons—no fleet—could exist unless they were attended by ships of this class; but they would never be fighting ships. They would be the Intelligence Department; they would also be wanted for military and naval transport, both of troops and stores; and possibly for carrying food. We wanted genuine war cruisers, constructed to minimise the effect of projectiles, to look after our commerce. He had received a letter from Lord Armstrong, who was unable to be present, but took the greatest interest in the subject; and his Lordship wrote—

"I am still distinctly in favour of swift vessels, and plenty of them. We have such a large expanse of ocean to cover that largeness of number is indispensable. To have ironclads in large number is impossible; therefore we must be contented with unarmoured cruisers. We cannot have invulnerable ships of any kind in even line-of-battle ships; they can only

carry armour over the most critical parts, leaving all the rest to be smashed. Swiftness of movement is the best and cheapest protection against being hit. A ship which carries guns instead of armour will have an immense preponderance of fire over unarmoured adversaries of equal tonnage. As an armament quick-firing guns are the thing. Each such gun is equivalent to half a dozen of the old ones, and with the new smokeless powder their penetration is enormous. England should have an innumerable Fleet both of large and small cruisers."

There had been a wonderful development of war vessels, European and extra-European. Of late years many foreign countries had obtained vessels of a class of smaller cruiser which he wished he had more of—vessels of great speed with large coal endurance and limited protection. Many of our large Shipbuilding Companies notably the Elswick Company, had turned out many of these vessels for the Navies of Italy, Chili, Argentina, Japan, &c. Some of these vessels, amongst them the Italian cruiser the *Piemonte*, which was built by Lord Armstrong's firm, and in which he himself had cruised, had a coal capacity of 600 tons, and was able to steam the considerable distance of 1,900 knots at full speed with natural draught, and could maintain a speed of 10 to 12 knots for 55 days, during which she could run a distance of 13,500 knots. Such cruisers were now in the hands of foreign countries, and it was of the utmost importance we should not allow ourselves to have vessels unable to cope with them. If the First Lord of the Admiralty would turn his attention to this subject, and would institute an inquiry as to the number of smaller cruisers which we ought to have, he would be astonished at the result. He had suggested, from the best information he could obtain, that we ought to have at least 100 protected cruisers under 4,000 tons for the protection of our mercantile interests, but many high authorities thought the number ought to be a great deal higher, having regard to the stupendous interests which had to be cared for. If the Navy of France were destroyed she would be a first-class Power still; but with us it was a case of actual life and death. It would be well if the Admiralty saw their way to build a large number of cruisers of about 4,000 tons and 22 knots at natural draught. Twenty or 30 of these vessels, with a considerable amount of protection and a very powerful armament, with

*Lord Sudeley*

great coal endurance, would place our position as regards the protection of our maritime interests in a very different condition from what they are now. In regard to speed the French had gone ahead of us in the manufacture of our boilers, and by instituting a system of tubular boilers they were able to get much greater speed than ourselves with natural draught. At the Admiralty we were perhaps stronger in our building power than we have ever been before. We had as Constructor of the Navy a gentleman in the person of Mr. White who was celebrated throughout Europe for his great skill as a naval architect, and for having been eminently successful in the vessels he had built. We had as Controller of the Navy Admiral Fisher, who combined in himself considerable technical knowledge with great knowledge of the requirements of the Service, which was most indispensable. We might be quite certain that ships which were built with which he and Mr. White were connected would be ships that officers and sailors would consider right, and which they would fight cheerfully and well, and that was a matter of great consequence. This question of cruisers was perhaps the gravest of naval questions, and deserved most earnest consideration when we considered our enormous Merchant Navy. The total tonnage of steam and sailing vessels of the world amounted to 23,000,000 tons, of which 11,000,000 belonged to the United Kingdom and her Colonies. He felt quite confident that the noble Earl at present at the head of the Admiralty would never allow the Navy to go below its present state of efficiency, and sincerely trusted he would see the necessity of increasing the number of our cruisers. All foreign Navies were doing their very utmost in the building of protected modern cruisers. The United States had devoted nearly the whole of their expenditure to supplying their Navy with these protected cruisers. The increase of the Naval Reserve might very well become a subject of discussion on another occasion. As it was found necessary 20 years ago to place our Naval Reserve at 20,000, the time had now arrived when we ought to try and double it with our increased Navy and the certainty that in time of war seamen would be so largely required. He sincerely hoped that the

suggestion thrown out that a certain number of men should be obtained from outside sources might not be agreed to, but that we might continue to rear all our seamen from the boy class, even if they were more expensive, as nothing had been more satisfactory than the class of men we had raised up of late years, and any alteration from that system would be a very great mistake. That plan of obtaining men from outside sources was tried many years ago, and no man in the Navy of any authority who had gone largely into the question will say otherwise than "Do not for one moment alter your present plan; you have the most splendid seamen in the world; it may cost a little more; but for Heaven's sake continue that most admirable system which has given us the best man-o'-war's men in the world!"

\*THE FIRST LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY (Earl SPENCER): Your Lordships will rejoice that two noble Lords of such special knowledge of this important subject should have addressed you to-night and should have made such interesting and valuable speeches. One of my noble Friends has acted as an executive officer in Her Majesty's Navy, and the other has had a long experience at the Board of Admiralty, and, besides that, has shown an amount of interest in the Navy which has earned for him the gratitude and approval of all who have the interest of the Navy at heart. I feel some diffidence in rising to reply to my two noble Friends, for I must frankly own I have had only a small experience compared with theirs in the affairs of the Navy. I must thank my noble Friends for the way in which they have referred to the other members of the Board of Admiralty and myself as the head of it. I cordially endorse the high commendations of my noble Friend, for I believe the Navy never had two more admirable officers than the Chief Constructor and the Controller. I do not complain of what my noble Friend behind me said on the subject of the policy of the present Board. We have thought it very important to have continuity of policy at the Board of Admiralty. I quite admit there have been objections taken by Members of the Party to which we belong to the mode in which additions to the Navy were made in recent years. I do not want to enter into the question

of the Naval Defence Act and the way in which the late Government carried out the policy of increasing the strength of the Navy. The present Board feels it of the highest importance to maintain the strength of the Navy and to maintain our position as the greatest Naval Power in the world; and we shall use our utmost endeavours to do that without spending unnecessarily one penny of the taxpayers' money. My noble Friend quoted some figures on the cost of the new construction under the present Board. He stated that in 1893-4 our Estimate for new construction was £4,623,000, whereas last year the cost of new construction was £4,864,000. Well, I am not able to follow my noble Friend exactly in his figures, but I will shortly state what I believe is the true position; I rather think he has included armaments in his calculation, but, excluding armaments, I should like to state the exact position. In the proposed new construction for this year, excluding armaments, under the Naval Defence Act in the Dockyards, £1,381,572 will be expended; in the Dockyard and under contract outside the Act £1,062,159, or, together, £2,443,731. Last year the corresponding amounts were £2,126,368 and £166,569, or a total of £2,292,937. That may be considered the normal expenditure upon the Navy. In recent discussions allusion was made to what the annual waste of the Navy might be, and that was put by my predecessor in another place at £2,300,000. Of course, that calculation may vary in accordance with the views of those who are putting the figures together, but I have no reason to differ materially from that. And it will be observed that these figures for construction may be considered outside the contract ships, which are paid for by money advanced under the Naval Defence Act. Outside that, the sum we have estimated this year for new construction slightly exceeds the cost of what is considered the annual and normal waste of the Navy. Probably there is very little material difference between what my noble Friend has stated and what I have stated, but I thought it better to put shortly the view which the Admiralty take of what our new construction will be, and the figures I have given will, I think, be found to be entirely correct.

My noble Friend went on to compare the Navy of this country with the Navies of France and of Russia combined. I think my noble Friend who spoke last was correct in attributing to Mr. Cobden the saying that we ought in this country to have our Navy equal in strength to any two Navies in the world. I always regret when it is necessary to name particular countries with our own in regard to ships. It may sometimes be supposed that we fear we shall be in collision with those countries or that we fear rivalry or hostility. I do not look upon the matter at all in that light. I trust no such disaster will happen. The rivalry and comparison is entirely a friendly one. It was, and is, a test of what other countries are doing, and by a comparison of what other nations are doing we can judge what we ought to do ourselves. No doubt they are influenced by us, but we also are influenced by them, and that must be the case. In the comparison which my noble Friend gave I am not quite sure that I altogether follow him, for it is so easy to arrange your figures in a different way, though probably when analysed the difference would be exceedingly small. I will give your Lordships what I consider to be the proper comparison between our Navy and those other Navies to which my noble Friend referred. I may premise that we ought to look beyond vessels complete and afloat, and take into account the number of ships we find are laid down on the stocks. Unless we do that we may find ourselves some day in a position of great inferiority. But when I say I take into account ships on the stocks that will lead us to consider the position in which we should be about 1896-7. Though we may not be guided by an Act of Parliament with regard to the number and type of ships we should build, I consider it absolutely necessary we should look forward. We have looked forward in our programme, but we have not laid down any absolute lines beyond this year and the next. It would not be right to do so. This year and the next will be years of considerable transition, because the effect of the Naval Defence Act comes to an end and a new programme will have to be commenced. Therefore, we thought it desirable, as a matter of policy, not to lay down a long programme, though

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every prudent Board of Admiralty must look forward beyond the immediate present with regard to shipbuilding. Making, then, a comparison between the English and French and Russian Navies, I may state that taking first-class battle-ships, at the present moment we are in a position of considerable superiority. When ships like the *Hood* and the *Empress of India*, and one or two other ships are completed, this will be more markedly the case; but if we take the ships on the stocks abroad, which will bring us down to 1896-7, the superiority is not maintained. At the present moment we have 11 first-class battle-ships completed, as against 12 French and Russian; nine completing afloat, against three French and Russian; but only one on the stocks as compared with five and four in the case of France and Russia respectively. Those are first-class battle-ships; therefore, in the immediate present or immediate future we stand well. But if we look forward it is necessary not to neglect the building of battle-ships, and that is an argument in favour of the policy we have pursued this year of having battle-ships rather than an increased number of cruisers. Adopting the same classification in regard to battle-ships of the second-class, we have 14 completed vessels to nine French and four Russian; we have none of the second-class either completing or on the stocks; but, taking them all together, we have 14 of this class to their 19; while of vessels of the third-class, we have 23 to their 21. If, therefore, we look forward to 1896-7 we ought to stand in respect of battle-ships much in this position: 58 to 64 French and Russian combined. Passing to cruisers and taking the same classification, I find that again we are in a position of considerable superiority. I quite admit that we cannot, as with regard to battle-ships, rest on a comparison of the number of our cruisers with the number of foreign cruisers. We have a very much larger commerce to protect and very much wider interests to look after than other nations; and, therefore, as regards cruisers, we must have a very much larger proportion than other nations who are great naval Powers. Classifying them rather differently to my noble Friend, I find that of cruisers of 5,000 tons and upwards we have completed 10 to two French and two Russian; com-

pleting afloat, six to one French and one Russian; and on the stocks five to three and two respectively. In other words, in cruisers of this class we have 21 to their 11. Of cruisers from 3,400 to 5,000 tons, we have completed 22, to three French and no Russian; completing afloat, five to one; and on the stocks seven to eight—total, 34 to their 12. That is a very marked superiority. With regard to smaller cruisers, the French and Russian Navies together are perhaps stronger than we are; but, on the whole, if we look forward to the same date—1896-7—we have of all three classes 62 cruisers to 40 of those two Powers. It is difficult to lay down a maximum number; but I quite admit the desirability of having a great number of those fleet vessels to protect our commerce. I do not know that it can be laid down positively that we ought to have this number or that; but the policy of recent years has been materially to increase the number of those cruisers. That is a policy which it is quite right to adopt, and certainly the Board have no wish to depart from the principle thus laid down. The question of the merits of different types of battle-ships is one that has been discussed for a very long time among those who are interested in naval architecture—the question whether you are to have battle-ships of the size of the *Royal Sovereign* or of the *Centurion* or *Barfleur* type. I have the greatest possible deference for the opinion of my noble Friend, and I feel conscious that my own opinion, if it were mine alone, would be worth nothing as against his; but I have taken a great deal of pains to consult experts in relation to this matter, and I confess I am absolutely of opinion that the larger type of battle-ship is the proper one for us to build and not the smaller. Now, what do we want in battle-ships? We want speed, coal endurance, and as great an amount of offensive and defensive power as we can get. If we compare vessels like the *Royal Sovereign* and the *Centurion*, we may say that in some respects they are almost identical. They are almost identical as to speed and coal endurance; they have a high freeboard and about the same power in manœuvring—all important qualifications—although the greater length and power of the *Royal Sovereign* enables her to maintain a higher speed

in rough seas than smaller vessels. But when we come to other points your Lordships will agree that the larger ships have immense superiority over the smaller type. Take the question of armour. The *Royal Sovereign* has hull armour of 18 inches, as compared with the 12 inches of the *Centurion*. Her barbette armour is 17 inches thick, as compared with 9 inches thick of the *Centurion*—a most important consideration when you think of what vessels and what armaments you may be opposed to in actual war—while her guns are 13½ inches and 67-ton guns as compared with the 10-inch and 29-ton guns of the latter ship. If one of these smaller vessels had to encounter an enormous ship like the *Royal Sovereign*, she would find that, although she might be equal to the other in coal endurance and in speed, she would be exceedingly inferior in armament and defensive power. The *Royal Sovereign* could perforate the armour of one of these smaller vessels, while the guns of the latter could not penetrate the armour of the former. These are very important considerations. It is of immense importance when we are building these large ships that they should be of such a character as would enable them in all cases to deal with the ships of the enemy. My noble Friend admits that in many respects these ships are inferior, but he says that in point of vulnerability they are the same in reference to ram and torpedo. However, if he admits that, I do not think I have much to quarrel with him about. I do not admit that the larger vessel is as vulnerable as the smaller, because in defensive power to beat off the attack of an enemy's vessel she is infinitely superior to the smaller one. My advisers inform me that it is very much better to spend somewhat more upon ships of a larger size than to have a greater number of ships of a smaller type. We could have, I believe, five *Renowns* to four *Royal Sovereigns*; and I much prefer, if we are to incur heavy expenditure for a ship, to have one which is equal to any vessel she can meet, and not to be perhaps at the mercy of a ship of the *Royal Sovereign* type. That, I believe, is entirely consistent with past naval history. There is hardly an instance in the old wars where a smaller frigate defeated a larger frigate, or where

a smaller three-decker defeated a larger line-of-battle ship of the same class. Therefore, I have great confidence in asserting that the larger type of battle-ship is the one we ought to adopt. There is one other consideration which we should not lose sight of—namely, that we can build ships more cheaply and more rapidly than our neighbours. For instance, the *Royal Sovereign* was built in 2½ years, exceedingly rapidly, and she would have cost £200,000 more to build in France than she cost to build in England. As to displacement, we calculate it upon a different principle to that which is adopted abroad; and if the same principle were adopted in estimating the tonnage of French and English ships, the disparity in tonnage between their larger ships and ours would not be so great. That was so in the case of the *Astræas*, of which the noble Lord had complained that 550 tons of coal were not sufficient for them to carry; but the fact is, if all their bunkers were filled, they could carry as much as 1,000 tons. My noble Friend alluded to the armoured cruisers, and expressed his regret that the Admiralty had not built more of them. In answer to his observations, I may say that it has been the fixed policy of the Admiralty not to build too many of this class of vessels, because if the ships have heavy plates on their sides they will lose in speed and in weight of armament. The Admiralty believe that it is far better to give them a curved protecting deck, such as has been adopted in the case of all our cruisers, instead of heavy side armour. By adopting this course we are able more efficiently to protect certain parts of the ships, while they are able to steam at greater speed and to carry a heavier armament. That has been the policy that has been adopted for some time at the Admiralty, and I cannot but think that it is the right one. The noble Lord also referred to the question of re-construction of old ships, upon which I cordially sympathise with his views. I believe the subject to be one of great importance. In my opinion, it would be of great advantage to re-fit our older battle-ships whose hulls are sound, so as to render them available as part of the naval force. They would be of enormous value to the fighting power of the country. That policy has been

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adopted. It was marked out very distinctly in the Report of the Committee on the Naval Manœuvres of 1888, in which occurs the following passage:—

“As a measure most ready to hand for increasing our reserve of battle-ships, without prejudice to the completion of the new vessels not yet ready, we strongly advocate the desirability of bringing forward such ships as the *Achilles*, *Warrior*, *Hector*, *Superb*, *Defence*, *Valiant*, and *Minotaur* into such a condition of efficiency as will at all events render them available as a Reserve Channel Squadron in case of sudden emergency. They are all iron ships well subdivided into compartments, fairly protected against shell fire, and are more than a match for many battle-ships which could be brought against them. Until such time, therefore, as the places of these vessels can be fully supplied by better, we deprecate their being allowed to go into disrepair. They are, in our opinion, for the most part capable of doing good service for many years to come; and when it is taken into consideration, supposing their hulls to be in good order, that all the ships we have named could be re-engined and re-boilered for about the cost of one new vessel, it appears to us to be most desirable that they should be made available to meet emergencies, and that so inexpensive a means of rapidly increasing our ironclad fleets should be made use of; but we distinctly desire to guard ourselves against giving an opinion that the building of new ironclads should not be proceeded with irrespective of such vessels.”

That is a well-defined policy which the Admiralty have had to consider and have continued, but I do not agree with the proposal that we should attempt to change the character of these old ships. My noble Friend is desirous that we should give these vessels a new armament and such engines as would enable them to be driven at an increased rate of speed, but we do not think that that policy ought to be adopted. That question has been considered over and over again at the Admiralty by successive Boards, but that has been the conclusion come to. We think that it will be of advantage to re-fit these vessels upon the old lines; but in order to make modern battle-ships out of these old hulls and give them engines that would drive them at a high rate of speed, we must take them to pieces and re-construct them at a cost of something like £200,000 to £250,000 each. The same reasoning applies, to a moderate extent, to changing the character of the armaments of these vessels. If properly re-fitted, however, these ships would make sound and useful vessels. Now I come to the subject of large cruisers. In my opinion, we ought to

have a number of fast and nimble cruisers on the ocean in order to meet the large cruisers of an enemy, which, if they were of high speed and heavy armament, might do an enormous amount of harm to our Mercantile Marine. These might belong to a small Power whose Navy could not compare with the strength of our own. My noble Friend alluded to the Russian ship the *Rurik*, and I will only repeat what we have stated over and over again, that we intend to build a ship that shall be superior to everything afloat in speed, coal endurance, and armament. I do not think that it would be right at the present moment to make known the actual lines on which the ships will be built—their length, beam, speed, or horse-power. Turning to another point, I quite admit the importance of increasing the number of our torpedo-boats, because in any future war we must be prepared for swarms of them issuing from the enemy's harbours and attacking our fleets both at sea and lying in harbour. The best way, however, of meeting the attacks of these boats will be to have vessels of very great speed which can run them down, and that is the policy which we have adopted. I cannot but think it is a sound one. The noble Lord alluded to the question of the merchant cruisers; and with regard to them we certainly do not at the present moment propose to depart from the policy of the late Government, although I admit that the whole subject is open to consideration, not as to the merits of the proposal itself, but as to the changes brought about by the increased number of our own fast cruisers which we intend to lay down. There are a considerable number of contracts running with companies; and notwithstanding the recent lamentable occurrence with regard to the Inman line, we hope that with the ships we are now engaged with we shall not have a repetition of that disastrous affair. Then the only other point to which I need refer is the manning. That is one of the most important points about the Navy; but I do not know that I follow the figures of my noble Friend. This year in the Estimates we have put down a larger number than he gives us credit for. The number is 76,700.

LORD BRASSEY: I referred to those available for sea service.

EARL SPENCER: At all events, we have proposed an increase of 2,600 over last year. I agree almost wholly with the view which my noble Friend has taken as to the desirability of having a large Naval Reserve in time of war; but we must bear in mind that the requirements of a modern fleet of ironclads are quite different from those of a fleet of the old wooden ships. You will have an enormous number of cases where highly-trained men will be required, and those men must go through the admirable training which is given in our training ships of the Navy. That must, to a certain extent, modify the desire to increase largely the Reserve. The whole subject, however, has been gone into lately by an able Committee appointed by my predecessor. All the arrangements to be made in time of war have been considered and the complements of ships have been determined, those complements consisting partly of trained seamen and artificers and partly of less highly-trained seamen of the Royal Naval Reserve, both first and second-class. I do not think that in regard to the number of the Royal Naval Reserve we shall be, next year or the year after, very far short of the number suggested by my noble Friend. But the present Admiralty administration have cordially taken up the recommendations for the improvement of the Royal Naval Reserve, and have adopted nearly all the recommendations of Sir G. Tryon's Committee. We are training men of the Second-Class Reserve longer in the training ships, and are offering them several other advantages in the way of pay and naval uniform. We have also increased the reserve of the engine-room complements by 500 men. I hope my noble Friend will see by this that we value extremely these Royal Naval Reserve men. We wish to encourage them, and to have as many as possible in reserve for working our ships in case of war. I think I have now dealt with all the chief points of this question, and I must apologise to your Lordships for the length at which I have troubled you, but it is not easy to compress within a few minutes an explanation upon so important a subject.

\*THE EARL OF RAVENSWORTH said, the explanation given by the First Lord of the policy of his Board would be highly satisfactory to the House and to



the country. Though the programme of the Admiralty for the year might be described as modest, he was glad to know that they were looking forward and were watching closely what was being done by foreign countries. Further, he was glad that both the noble Lord and the Representative of the Admiralty in another place had declined to give explicit information about the ships to be built. Hitherto, the Admiralty had been much too lavish with such information, of which foreign countries might avail themselves. It was very necessary for this country to keep ahead of other nations in her Navy, and especially in the matter of speed; for the power of a modern vessel depended largely on its speed. The noble Lord had pointed out the enormous preponderance of English commerce over that of other nations. It appeared by *Lloyd's Register* that while the steam tonnage of the rest of the world was very little over 5,000,000, the total steam tonnage of England and her Colonies was over 9,000,000. For the protection of that commerce it was absolutely necessary for us to maintain fleets in every sea. That alone was an adequate reason for a gradual increase of our Fleet, without reference to what might be done by foreign statesmen or foreign Powers. An Admiralty authority had wisely pointed out recently that a single powerful cruiser belonging to a weak Power might inflict irreparable damage upon our commerce at some distant part of the world. Upon that point reference might be made to what was being done by two very small Powers. The other day the Japanese Government had built for them a most powerful cruiser, remarkably armed with an exclusive armament of quick-firing guns, and she achieved on her trial very nearly 23 knots under forced draught, and her engines developed about 15,000 horse-power, her tonnage being 4,150. He was probably correct in saying she was the fastest cruiser in the world. Since that time, the same establishment, Elswick, had turned out the *Nuova de Giulio* for the Argentine Republic. That vessel on her trial achieved nearly the same rate of speed, 22·74 knots. We had not at present afloat a cruiser of anything like that speed. That, again, showed the neces-

sity for our keeping ahead, for in these days the power of warships depended upon their speed; and when it was remembered that these vessels could deliver a heavy concentrated fire, we must look out for the possibility of meeting serious adversaries in parts of the world where they would hardly be expected to exist. He congratulated the Admiralty for pursuing a continuity of policy as successors of the late Government, and were carrying on work in the Dockyards, and the result had been the creation of a Fleet unparalleled in power and numbers. He was glad that the fatal policy of leaving ships for six, seven, or eight years on the stocks had been abandoned. Taking two vessels—the *Royal Sovereign* and the *Hood*—an actual saving of upwards of £30,000 had been effected in each case by pushing forward the work, and he thought the Dockyard authorities were to be congratulated upon their performances in that respect during the last two years. The mischief of leaving to the caprice of Parliament interference with a naval programme had been illustrated the other day in the German Reichstag, where a programme approved by the Emperor, by the Secretary for the Navy, and cordially supported by the Chancellor himself, had been defeated, and the Vote for six powerful ships to replace worn-out, obsolete vessels had been struck off the Estimates. He would like to know what steps the Admiralty were taking with regard to the reserves of engineers and stokers? In order to get full value out of the triple expansion engines, it was necessary to secure the services of highly-trained and skilled engineers and stokers, and he thought sufficient steps had not yet been taken to form Reserves of such men. It was also satisfactory to hear that a serviceable force of torpedo-catchers was contemplated. It was not wise to place too much reliance upon our Naval Reserve, for our trade should not be stopped in the event of war, and it would be very awkward to deprive our merchant vessels of their best men in that case. We should, if possible, attract Reserve men from less important ships than the magnificent steamers on which they were now employed, and which we should require in time of war for the supply of the Fleet, and for keeping up our communications.

THE EARL OF DUNDONALD called attention upon the point of the efficiency for warfare of our armed merchant ships and the nationality of the crews to the fact that there were a large number of Chinamen among the crews of our armed merchantmen running between Japan and Vancouver. When travelling on one of those vessels he had discussed the matter with the officers of the ship; and although they thought it would be very possible that the Chinamen might be replaced by English lads at much the same cost, they were unanimous in thinking that the question of discipline was a difficulty in the way, for they considered their present powers were not sufficient to enable them to maintain proper order over the boys, and, moreover, they found the Chinamen worked very well on the whole. He thought it would be worth the consideration of the Admiralty whether some regulations could not be made by which every man on board our armed merchantmen, and, if possible, also every boy, should be required to be of British nationality. In the event of those merchantmen having to fight with those Chinamen on board, the Chinamen should also be regularly drilled, so as to be able to fight in the event of war breaking out before British seamen could possibly be sent out to take their places.

[The subject then dropped.]

#### LAND TRANSFER BILL [H.L.]

A Bill to amend the Land Transfer Act, 1875—Was presented by the Lord Chancellor; read 1<sup>st</sup>; and to be printed. (No. 30.)

#### STATUTE LAW REVISION BILLS.

Moved, That a Committee of Six Lords be appointed to join with a Committee of the House of Commons to consider all Statute Law Revision Bills of the present Session.—(*The Lord Chancellor.*)

Motion agreed to.

The Lords following were named of the Committee:

L. Chancellor.	L. Watson.
E. Kimberley ( <i>L. President.</i> )	L. Halsbury.
E. Morley.	L. Thring.

Ordered, That the Committee have power to agree with the Committee of the House of Commons in the appointment of a Chairman:

Then a Message was ordered to be sent to the House of Commons to acquaint them therewith, and to request them to appoint Six Members of that House to be joined with the said Com-

mittee pursuant to the Resolution of this House of the 27th of February last and to the Message of the House of Commons of yesterday signifying their concurrence in the said Resolution.

#### ARCHDEACONRY OF CORNWALL BILL [H.L.].—(No. 19.)

House in Committee (according to order): Bill reported without Amendment; Standing Committee negatived; and Bill to be read 3<sup>rd</sup> on Monday next.

#### COINAGE (No. 2) BILL.—(No. 28.)

House in Committee (according to order): Bill reported without amendment; Standing Committee negatived; and Bill to be read 3<sup>rd</sup> on Monday next.

#### SALE OF GOODS BILL [H.L.].—(No. 8.)

Read 3<sup>rd</sup> (according to order), and passed, and sent to the Commons.

House adjourned at a quarter before Seven o'clock, to Monday next, a quarter before Eleven o'clock.

### HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Friday, 10th March 1893.

The House met at Two of the clock.

### QUESTIONS.

#### OVERSEERS AND THE RATE BOOKS.

CAPTAIN FENWICK (Durham, Houghton-le-Spring): I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board whether he will take steps to ascertain why the assistant overseer for the township of West Rainton, in the County of Durham, on Thursday 16th February, refused to allow two rate-payers to look at his books after due notice had been given him; and whether he will take steps to have the law enforced in this matter?

\*THE PRESIDENT OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. H. H. FOWLER, Wolverhampton, E.): I am informed by the overseers of Rainton that the assistant overseer of that parish received a communication asking him whether he was at liberty to permit two gentlemen to have access to the parish

rate books. The assistant overseer referred the writer to the overseers, and the overseers informed him that if the persons referred to were ratepayers they could examine the rate book at any time between 1 and 3 o'clock on the 21st ultimo. They did not, however, so attend. If in any case the statutory provisions as to inspection of the rate book are contravened, proceedings may be taken for the enforcement of a penalty.

#### CAPITATION GRANTS.

**MR. W. F. D. SMITH** (Strand, Westminster): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether the Government will provide an extra capitation grant to non-commissioned officers of the Yeomanry Cavalry who, under the new Regulations, may qualify as drill instructors at the School for Auxiliary Cavalry at Aldershot; and whether any allowance will be made for the travelling expenses of such instructors when attending squad or troop drills in their own regimental districts?

\***THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR** (Mr. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN, Stirling, &c.): The Contingent and Clothing Fund of the Yeomanry will be increased from April by £1 per man, in order to cover, among other things, any expenses which may arise in connection with these Assistant Instructors.

#### FINES FOR CATTLE TRESPASS.

**MR. T. D. SULLIVAN** (Donegal, W.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether his attention has been called to the fact that Colonel Bulboy, Resident Magistrate at Arranmore Petty Sessions, County Donegal, in June 1892, fined a number of persons in various sums of money for trespass of cattle on a mountain belonging to a gentleman whose property is at present in the Landed Estates Court; and that Mr. Orr, Resident Magistrate at Arranmore Petty Sessions, in July 1892, for a like alleged offence, imposed fines upon another number of persons; were those convictions and fines legal under 14 and 15 Vic. c. 92, s. 20; how many of those fines were paid; and will the Government order the money to be refunded?

*Mr. H. H. Fowler*

\***THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND** (Mr. J. MORLEY, Newcastle-upon-Tyne): These were cases of trespass at the suit of the Receiver under the Court of Chancery, acting by direction of the Head Receiver of the Court. The defendants were ordered to pay trespass rates under the 14th and 15th Vic. cap. 92, sec. 20, but were not fined. In 20 out of 22 cases these rates were paid. The trespass orders are payable to the complainants, not to the Crown, and the latter cannot interfere.

#### LABOURERS' COTTAGES IN TIPPERARY.

**MR. MANDEVILLE** (Tipperary, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland if it is a fact that representations by a number of labourers in Emly, County Tipperary, were made to the Tipperary Board of Guardians last November, requesting that labourers' cottages should be erected in that district; whether the Memorials have been considered by the Guardians; and whether a Local Government Board Inspector has been sent down to inquire into the matter; and, if not, on what grounds?

\***MR. J. MORLEY**: The Local Government Board inform me that application was made in November last to the Board of Guardians by a number of ratepayers for the erection of labourers' cottages in the Emly district. The matter has since been under the consideration of the Guardians, who have called for maps and specifications, &c. I am advised that no unreasonable delay has taken place on the part of the Guardians, who have already largely availed themselves of the powers given to them by the Labourers' Acts. The matter does not appear to call for any action at present on the part of the Local Government Board.

#### REGENT'S CANAL DOCK.

**MR. STEWART WALLACE** (Tower Hamlets, Limehouse): I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board whether his attention has been drawn to the insanitary condition of the Regent's Canal Dock, the causes thereof, and remedies therefor; and, if so, will he have immediate steps taken to have the nuisances complained of abated, and have a sufficiency of proper sanitary appliances provided without delay?

\*MR. H. H. FOWLER : I have received communications with reference to the Regent's Canal Dock, and the attention of the Port Sanitary Authority of London has been drawn to the matter. I have no reason to doubt that if they are satisfied that proceedings for the abatement of nuisances are necessary they will take action in the matter.

#### SLAVERY IN MADAGASCAR WATERS.

MR. SAMUEL SMITH (Flintshire) : I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether the Foreign Office, at the request of the French Government, has issued instructions to the officers of the British Navy and the British Consular Agents in Madagascar in no way to concern themselves with exercising a police control over the dhows of the various nationalities in the waters of Madagascar, and to abstain from searching vessels of any flag in Madagascar waters ; and whether he is aware that there has been a revival of the Slave Trade between Africa and Madagascar ?

\*THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Sir E. GREY, Northumberland, Berwick) : The standing instructions on this subject were issued by Her Majesty's late Government in August last. They were a necessary consequence of the Brussels Act and of the general recognition of the French Protectorate of Madagascar. They did not result from any request of the French Government. The suppression of the Slave Trade in Madagascar waters is now regulated by the Brussels' Act as modified by the French Declaration appended to it, and we have no definite information from which we can infer that the trade has materially revived.

#### PRISON WARDERS.

MR. SAMUEL SMITH : I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he will take measures to secure a more careful selection and training of prison warders, in view of the grave statements made by the Manchester City Justices at their recent meeting, when they had under their notice some instances of warders trafficking with local prisoners ; and were also informed from an official source that similar practices occurred in every gaol in England ?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. ASQUITH, Fife, E.) : The greatest care is exercised by the Prison Commissioners in the selection and training of prison officers, who as a body are found to be trustworthy. Of the four warders recently discharged from Manchester Prison for trafficking, three were appointed by the Local Authorities before the prisons were taken over by the Government. Experience shows that it is difficult to provide any absolute safeguard against trafficking, but there is no reason to believe that the practice is of common occurrence.

#### THE CORK MAILS.

MR. MAURICE HEALY (Cork) : I beg to ask the Postmaster General whether arrangements could be made with the Great Southern and Western Railway Company to run the ordinary Cork mails direct to and from Kingstown through Islandbridge Junction without going into Kingsbridge Station ; whether this is now done with the Sunday American mail ; and what saving of time is thereby effected ?

\*THE POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. A. MORLEY, Nottingham, E.) : The arrangement indicated is one which concerns the Railway Company rather than the Post Office, and I am in communication with the company on the subject. As regards the incoming American mails, the arrangement appears to be already in force, but I do not know what saving of time actually results from it.

#### THE ULSTER TENANT FARMERS' ASSOCIATION.

MR. T. W. RUSSELL (Tyrone, S.) : I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he has received a deputation from the Ulster Tenant Farmers' Association in reference to the question of temporarily reducing the judicial rents ; and if he is now prepared to state at what decision the Government has arrived upon the question ?

\*MR. J. MORLEY : A number of gentlemen from Ulster have waited upon me in reference to the question of a readjustment of the judicial rents. The Government have arrived at no decision in the matter.

## THE CHANGE IN THE AMERICAN MAIL ROUTE.

MR. FLYNN (Cork, N.): I beg to ask the Postmaster General whether the London mails landed at Queenstown, from the steamer *Servia*, on the 19th February, were delivered ready sorted in London in the space of 16½ hours; and whether he can state what delay was caused by the despatch of the mails for Great Britain and Ireland from New York on 25th February by the American line steamer *New York*, bound for Southampton, in the delivery of American mails in the London District, the Midland Counties, the North of England, Scotland, and Ireland, respectively?

CAPTAIN DONELAN (Cork, E.): I beg to ask the Postmaster General whether he has received a copy of a resolution passed by the Queenstown Town Commissioners, complaining of the great delay in the delivery of the Irish portion of the American mail caused by carrying it to Southampton; whether he is aware that specially addressed Irish mail matter was landed at Queenstown at 3 a.m. on Sunday, the 5th inst., from the steamship *Aurania*, while the remainder, which was despatched on the same day by the International liner *New York*, was not delivered until Tuesday, the 7th inst.; and whether, in view of the serious loss and inconvenience thus inflicted upon Irish traders, he will communicate with the United States Postal Authorities on the subject, and call their immediate attention to the consequences which must result to Irish commerce by the adoption of this route?

MR. MAURICE HEALY: I beg to ask the Postmaster General whether the Iman-American liner *New York*, which sailed from New York at 10 o'clock a.m. on the 25th ult., carried not merely English letters, but also the Irish mails from America, with the result that the Irish letters have been landed at Southampton; what loss of time this involved in the delivery of the Irish letters; whether the Queenstown route would also have been better for letters for the North of England; whether the Cunard liner *Aurania*, calling at Queenstown, left New York on the same day half an hour earlier, but only carrying specially addressed correspondence; when the Irish mail would have been delivered if despatched by the *Aurania*; and whe-

ther steps will be taken to secure that the American Post Office shall not defer the interests of the Irish mail service to its preference for an American line of steamers?

SIR THOMAS ESMONDE (Kerry, W.): I beg to ask the Postmaster General whether the mails from the United States to Ireland are to be carried in future *viâ* Southampton, instead of *viâ* Queenstown; whether, by this arrangement, the mails will reach Dublin and Cork 10 hours and 19 hours respectively later than if landed at Queenstown; and whether, in view of the serious inconvenience that would result in Ireland from the adoption of the Southampton route for the carriage of the mails, he will take steps to have them landed at Queenstown?

\*MR. A. MORLEY: It will doubtless be convenient to the House if I embody in one answer my replies to the several questions asked about the mails brought by the *New York* and the *Aurania*. Those steamers left the port of New York within half an hour of each other on the 25th of February. The *New York* landed mails for all parts of the United Kingdom at Southampton at 9.40 p.m. on the 4th inst. The *Aurania*, carrying correspondence specially super-scribed for conveyance by her, landed mails at Queenstown at 3.45 a.m., on the 5th instant. Correspondence for Ireland was, as a matter of fact, brought by both vessels. Letters, &c., carried by the *Aurania* were delivered in Dublin only an hour earlier than those carried by the *New York*, although the last-named packet had been delayed by fog in the Channel, and her mails did not reach London till midnight on Saturday, so that letters could not be delivered in London till Monday morning, and the connection with the Saturday night mails for all parts of the Kingdom was missed. Even as it was, letters for London and for England generally lost nothing by coming to Southampton, and those for Scotland, the Northern and many other parts of England, were accelerated; but those for the Irish Provinces were not delivered till at various times from Monday afternoon to Tuesday morning, whereas the Irish provincial letters brought by the *Aurania* to Queenstown were all delivered by Monday morning. The United States Post Office provides the

conveyance to this country, and has a right to select such steamers as it thinks best. In sending by its new contract-line all correspondence not specially superscribed to go by other lines it does precisely what this country does in regard to the outward mails; and it also follows the lead of this country in allowing the senders of letters to secure by special superscription the use of other steamers. It cannot be stated beforehand what will be the effect on the time of delivery in Dublin and Cork, which depends on many chances impossible to foresee. Under existing arrangements Ireland has the advantage of the latest possible posting for letters, &c., sent to the United States, but I am not in a position to secure her the corresponding advantage in connection with the homeward mails. I shall watch carefully the effect of the recent changes on the distribution of mails throughout the United Kingdom, and, should the facts justify it, I will not fail to communicate with the United States Post Office on the subject. I should add that I have received the resolution mentioned in Question No. 19 passed by the Queenstown Town Commissioners; and also, in reply to Question No. 17, that the mails brought by the *Servia* reached Queenstown at 4.45 p.m. on the 19th ultimo, and arrived in London completely sorted at 10.50 a.m. on the 20th.

**MR. FLYNN:** May I ask whether the Post Office authorities of this country are justified in incurring additional expense in carrying the mails from Southampton to various parts of Ireland when if the vessels called at Queenstown the cost would be comparatively trifling?

**MR. A. MORLEY:** That is not a matter under the control of the British Post Office. The arrangements for the conveyance of the mails from the United States are in the hands of the United States Post Office, and they land the mails where they choose.

**MR. FLYNN:** Has the right hon. Gentleman lost sight of the fact that the *Aurania* is much slower than the other vessels he named, and therefore the comparison in rapidity of delivery does not hold good?

**MR. A. MORLEY:** I made no comparison. I only stated the facts.

**\*MR. MAURICE HEALY:** Would it not be possible for the right hon. Gentle-

man to urge upon the American Government the desirability of despatching the Irish mails by boats calling at Queenstown?

**MR. A. MORLEY:** If experience justifies the request I will communicate with the United States Government, with the view of having better arrangements made.

#### THE SOUTH KERRY FISHING INDUSTRY.

**MR. KILBRIDE (Kerry, S.):** I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he will state if any member of the Congested Districts Board has visited South Kerry; and, if so, when; and whether, considering the requirements of the district, and the wealth of the fish off the coast there, they intend to take any steps towards the erection of piers and boatslips, with the view of developing the fishing industry with some degree of safety to the lives and property of the fishermen?

**\*MR. J. MORLEY:** I am informed that South Kerry has been visited by members of the Congested Districts Board, and that two of the Board's Inspectors have also been employed for some months in making inquiries there for the information of the Board. It is in contemplation to improve the harbour accommodation on the coast, but no decision has yet been come to as to the places where piers or boatslips are to be constructed.

#### THE STATE OF COUNTY CLARE.

**MR. ARNOLD-FORSTER (Belfast, W.):** I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland what was the actual strength of the Royal Irish Constabulary establishment in the County Clare on the 1st March, 1st April, and 22nd August, 1892, respectively; and whether the Grand Jury of the County Clare, in their resolution of 3rd March, 1892, recommended the reduction of the county establishment as stated by the Chief Secretary, or only the reduction of the extra force and the increase of the "Free" force?

**\*MR. J. MORLEY:** In answering this question, I should like to explain I did not intend to convey the idea the other day that the Grand Jury desired a decrease of the force. What I meant to say was that they desired a decrease of the extra force, and they wanted an

increase of the free force which was not statutorily possible. The total authorised establishment for the County Clare, including 24 men of the reserve, was on the 1st of March, 1892, 512 men. A reduction, however, in this number had been already under consideration, and, pending the decision to be come to, steps were not taken to fill vacancies. Thus, on March 1st, 1892, the actual number in the county was 475. On the 1st of April, 1892, the actual number was 460. On the 22nd of August, 1892, the actual number was 462. The recent decision of the Government to send 50 extra men to the county has the effect of bringing the total authorised number for the county to three above the number at which it stood on March 1st, 1892, before it was reduced by the late Government.

\***MR. ARNOLD-FORSTER**: Then when the right hon. Gentleman stated that the right hon. Member for Leeds had reduced the force in County Clare at the request of the Grand Jury, he did not mean that the force ordinarily employed had been decreased. Is he aware that the Grand Jury twice recommended an increase of the force?

\***MR. J. MORLEY**: I am not aware that the Grand Jury recommended a gross increase. I do know that they asked for a transfer of extra force, and that was what I believe I conveyed to the House. There was an actual reduction of the county force by 15 under the late Government.

**MR. ARNOLD-FORSTER**: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that the reduction was not owing to any action on the part of the Executive, but was an effect of the triennial re-arrangement of the Constabulary establishment?

**MR. J. MORLEY**: I confess I experience some difficulty in following these details so closely. I have explained more than once what I meant to convey. I think I should have notice of any further questions.

\***MR. ARNOLD-FORSTER**: Am I correct in saying that the answer of the right hon. Gentleman materially modifies his statement that the force in County Clare was reduced by the right hon. Gentleman the late Chief Secretary?

**MR. J. MORLEY**: It is perfectly true that the right hon. Gentleman did

reduce the actual force in the county. The rest is a matter of argument.

**MR. W. REDMOND** (Clare, E.): May I ask the right hon. Gentleman to bear in mind that the Grand Jury is an absolutely non-representative body. With regard to the fact that they advised an increase of the Constabulary force, will he remember that the Boards of Guardians and other Local Bodies directly representing the ratepayers have passed resolutions condemning the action of the Grand Jury, and taken an exactly opposite view?

#### PLACES OF WORSHIP SITES BILL.

**MR. J. E. ELLIS** (Nottingham, Rushcliffe): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether after Second Reading of the Places of Worship Sites Bill (which was read a second time in 1892 with the assent of the present Leader of the Opposition) he will consent to its being referred to the Grand Committee on Law, &c.?

**MR. ASQUITH**: So far as the Government is concerned, there will be no objection to this Bill being referred at the proper time to the Grand Committee on Law, provided that this can be done without interference with the progress of Bills for which the Government are directly responsible.

#### THE OPIUM TRADE.

**MR. KIMBER** (Wandsworth): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether, in view of the testimony given to the innocuousness of the moderate use of opium by men of long experience in India, including members of the medical profession, he will bring in a measure, or support such a measure if brought in, for the purpose of removing opium and its preparations from the operation of the Pharmacy Act, and allow it to be sold freely by licensed persons, without being marked poison, as is permitted in India, the opium bearing the stamp of Her Majesty the Empress of India? I will also ask the Under Secretary of State for India whether, in view of the strict enactments of the Pharmacy Act, by which opium and its preparations are prohibited from being sold in this country, unless prominently labelled poison, and the sale of which is otherwise carefully guarded, he will state if it is intended, in the interest of Her

Majesty's subjects in India, to put the sale of that poison under similar restrictions ?

\***THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA** (Mr. GEORGE RUSSELL, North Beds.): The two questions of the hon. Member may be answered together. Her Majesty's Government have no intention of introducing or supporting any measure for the purpose described in the first question ; nor have they decided to request the Government of India to place the sale of opium in that country under the restrictions mentioned in the second question.

#### KERRY FISHERIES.

**SIR THOMAS ESMONDE** (Kerry, W.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland if he is aware that a number of fishermen have been fined for fishing in the River Owenmore, County Kerry, in parts of the river which the Fishery Commissioners have since declared to be free ; and whether, in view of the fact that these men were fined for fishing where they had a right to fish, he will use his influence with the Local Justices to have the fines and the costs attaching to them remitted ?

\***MR. J. MORLEY**: Fishing within the limits defined by Section 44, cap. 88, of the 13th and 14th Vict., is declared to be a penal offence, unless the fishing be by a person having a "several fishery" within such limits. The circumstance of the waters being free within these limits does not touch the question, as the object of the enactment referred to is to prevent the capture of the fish at the mouths of the rivers. The fines imposed on the fishermen to whom the hon. Baronet apparently refers have been reduced to 10s. in each case with costs by the Lords Justices, and the issue of the warrants for the collection of the reduced fines is a matter for the discretion of the Local Justices, with which the Government cannot interfere.

#### THE LEITRIM MAGISTRACY.

**MR. PATRICK M'HUGH** (Leitrim, N.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether his attention has been called to the fact that an insane patient, whom the police were about to take to the Sligo District Lunatic Asylum, was detained two days in Manorhamilton Police Barracks, owing to difficulty in finding a second

Magistrate to sign the necessary form of committal ; is he aware that out of a population of 78,618 in the County of Leitrim 71,098 are Roman Catholics, and that of 63 persons who hold the Commission of the Peace for that county only three are Roman Catholics ; has the Lord Chancellor of Ireland been requested to appoint to the Commission of the Peace for the County of Leitrim certain Nationalists, whose names were forwarded to him ; and will he appoint those gentlemen to the Commission of the Peace ; if not, will he explain on what grounds he declines to do so ?

\***MR. J. MORLEY**: I have received a Report, from which it appears that the lunatic referred to in the first paragraph was detained in the police barrack for about 26 hours, no second Magistrate being available to commit him. As regards the remainder of the question, the Lord Chancellor has under consideration the names of gentlemen recommended for appointment to the Commission of the Peace in the County Leitrim.

#### THE ARMAMENT OF INDIAN TROOPS.

**MR. ROBERT WALLACE** (Edinburgh, E.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether his attention has been called to a paragraph in a recent issue of the *Army and Navy Gazette*, in which it is alleged that British Infantry battalions in India are to be re-armed with the magazine rifle, and to be supplied with Maxim guns of the calibre of the Martini-Henry rifle ; whether the Maxim bullets will be about twice the size of the magazine bullets ; whether, several years ago, the Martini-Henry calibre was discarded ; and, in consequence of the Mawand disaster, or some equally cogent reason, it was resolved to use the same size of bullet for rifles and machine guns, so as to avoid the risk of the troops having ammunition unfitted to their weapons ; and what are the reasons why the War Office is now seeking to substitute once more the double size of bore for the single in India ; and if it is intended, in spite of the resolution of the Horse Guards to the contrary, to perpetuate a similar arrangement in this country ?

\***MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN**: The armament of the troops in India is not under the control of the War Department ; but I may say that it is intended



that the British Infantry should be armed with the magazine rifle and the Native troops with Martini-Henry rifles. There are two calibres of Maxim guns to be provided for India—namely, the .45 in. for land defences, and the 3.03 in. for the field. If, therefore, from any cause, the Maxim gun of Martini-Henry calibre should be sent into the field, where European and Native troops would be serving together, ammunition of both calibres would be available. There is no intention of substituting the large for the small bore for field service.

#### THE FOCHABERS INTIMIDATION CASE.

MR. SEYMOUR KEAY (Elgin and Nairn): I beg to ask the Lord Advocate whether the late Procurator Fiscal of Morayshire gave any, and if so what, reasons for deciding not to take proceedings against John Andrew in what is known as the Fochabers Intimidation case?

\*THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. B. BALFOUR, Clackmannan, &c.): I learn upon inquiry that the reasons for which the late Procurator Fiscal did not take proceedings were two—(1) because there was not sufficient evidence to establish the charge; and (2) because the Lord Advocate stated in the House of Commons in July, 1891, in answer to a question, that even if the allegations put in the question had been correct, there was nothing which amounted to undue influence as defined by the Corrupt Practices Act.

#### PRISON STAFFS.

MR. JOHN BURNS (Battersea): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether arrangements have been made to transfer redundant schoolmasters in prisons to the clerical staff; if so, whether the schoolmasters so transferred will be placed at the bottom of the clerical list for purposes of seniority, in order that the clerks, who joined the Department as such, will not have their promotion retarded by such transfer? I will also ask the right hon. Gentleman what is the present number of storekeepers and clerks in the Prison Department who have been rendered redundant by the closing of prisons or reduction of the population in others; to what number will such redundants be increased by the transfer of redundant schoolmasters to the clerical staff; and how it is intended to reduce this number

of redundants, with a view to economy in the Public Service?

MR. ASQUITH: Arrangements are being made under Treasury sanction to employ a few of the redundant convict prison schoolmasters as temporary prison clerks until they can be absorbed as schoolmasters. No arrangement has been made to transfer any schoolmasters to the permanent clerical staff, so that the question of seniority does not arise. I am informed that there are no redundant storekeepers or clerks.

#### ILLITERATE VOTERS,

MR. STUART-WORTLEY (Sheffield, Hallam): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when the Return of persons voting as illiterates at the General Election of 1892 will be in the hands of Members?

MR. ASQUITH: The Return will be in the hands of Members in the course of the next few days.

#### THE ARMY PAY DEPARTMENT CLERKS.

MR. LABOUCHERE (Northampton): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War why the warrant for the formation of a Corps of Military Staff Clerks in the Army Pay Department is not issued?

\*MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: There has, I am told, been some inevitable delay in the completion of this warrant, but I have every reason to hope it will be issued shortly.

#### SOLDIERS IN MUFTI.

MR. LABOUCHERE: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War why the Staff sergeants major in the Transport Branch are allowed to wear plain clothes when off duty, and why this privilege is not accorded to the Staff sergeants major in the Supply Branch, although the duties of both are the same; and whether this apparent inequality can be remedied?

\*MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: I am not aware of any inequality such as my hon. Friend indicates. The regulations as to the wearing of plain clothes by Staff sergeants major in the Transport Branch and the Supply Branch of the Army Service Corps are identical.

#### SIR R. HAMILTON.

MR. LODER (Brighton): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for

*Mr. Campbell-Bannerman*

the Colonies whether Sir Robert Hamilton has resigned the post of Governor of Tasmania, or whether he is in this country on leave of absence; and, if so, whether he can state the date on which the term of his appointment expires, and when a successor will be appointed?

**SIR E. GREY** (answering for Mr. Buxton): Sir R. Hamilton is still Governor of Tasmania, and is now in this country on leave of absence. His time of office expires this month, and his successor will shortly be appointed.

**MR. LODER**: Does not his term of office expire to-day?

**SIR E. GREY**: That is a detail I cannot answer without notice.

#### CRIME IN ENGLAND AND WALES.

**MR. ARTHUR O'CONNOR** (Donegal, N.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will state the number of indictable offences committed in England (so far as known to the police) during the last 12 months for which Returns are complete, and the number of persons committed for trial in respect of them?

**MR. ASQUITH**: The number of indictable offences committed was, in England and Wales, 39,021, and in England only, 37,587; and the number of persons committed for trial was 12,836, and in England, only 12,191.

**MR. A. O'CONNOR**: Am I to gather from the answer that for three out of every four crimes committed, no person was sent for trial?

**MR. ASQUITH**: No one was committed in 26,000 out of the 39,000 cases.

#### THE COUNTY MAGISTRACY.

**MR. STUART-WORTLEY**: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for the Home Department whether the promised Return relating to the magistracy in England and Wales is one which has been already ordered by this House; and, if so, on whose Motion and on what day; and when is the Return likely to be presented?

**THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT** (Mr. HERBERT GLADSTONE, Leeds, W.): Two Returns relating to this subject have been asked for and granted. The first was moved for by the hon. Member for Sunderland on February 2, and is similar to the Return granted by the late Home Secretary in 1888. This will take possibly six months to

prepare. The second was moved for on February 21 by the hon. Member for the Rye Division, and will probably take about three months to prepare.

**MR. STUART-WORTLEY**: Had the hon. Member in his mind either of these Returns when he spoke in this House on the 3rd instant?

**MR. H. GLADSTONE**: I had both of them in my mind.

**MR. STUART-WORTLEY**: Is either of the Returns calculated to elicit any information whatever as regards the political opinions of Magistrates?

**MR. H. GLADSTONE**: It is perfectly impossible to ask that the political opinions of Magistrates should be stated in a Return.

#### RETURNS OF CRIMES COMMITTED IN ENGLAND.

**MR. ARTHUR O'CONNOR**: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will state the numbers of the following crimes committed in England during the last 12 months, for which Returns are complete, namely, arson and other wilful burning; killing and maiming cattle; maliciously destroying fences, walls, &c.; and other malicious and wilful damage?

**MR. ASQUITH**: The numbers of the following crimes committed (so far as known to the police) during the 12 months ended 29th September, 1892, are:—

	England and Wales.	England only.
Arson and other wilful burning - - - -	364	352
Killing and maiming cattle - - - -	28	28
Maliciously destroying fences, walls, &c. (Offences determined summarily)	2,644	2,478
Other malicious and wilful damage:—If the heading "Other Malicious and Wilful Damage and Trespass" in Table 8 of the Judicial Statistics is referred to	13,718	12,493
If the number of malicious and wilful damage cases other than the three above named is required - - - -	16,495	15,219

**MR. ARTHUR O'CONNOR:** I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will state the numbers of the following crimes committed (so far as known to the police) in England during the last 12 months, for which the Returns are complete:—namely, murder (not including infants under one year); manslaughter; attempts at murder; shooting at, wounding, and stabbing; assaults on peace officers?

**MR. ASQUITH:** The figures are as follows:—

	England and Wales.	England only.
Murder (not including infants under 1 year)	73	71
Manslaughter - - -	160	151
Attempts to murder ("Attempts at Murder" in the question)	86	72
Shooting at, wounding, stabbing, &c., to do bodily harm. ("Shooting at, wounding, and 'stabbing'" in the question) - - -	819	741
Assaults on peace officers. (Indictable offences) - - -	41	40
Assaults on peace officers, resisting, obstructing, &c. (Offences determined summarily) - - -	12,635	11,947

**MR. FLYNN:** May I ask if, in view of these figures, the Government have any intention of considering the propriety of extending the Criminal Law and Procedure Act to England?

[No answer was given.]

**\*MR. STUART-WORTLEY:** I beg to ask the Home Secretary whether the Returns of the Prison Commission for England and Wales do not show that persons of Irish birth and parentage, who form 2 per cent. of the population, form also 10 per cent. of the prison population?

**MR. ASQUITH:** The hon. Gentleman must give notice of that question.

#### THE IRISH TEACHERS' CAPITATION GRANT.

**MR. ARTHUR O'CONNOR:** I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland when the capita-

tion grant, in lieu of school fees, will be paid to the teachers in East Donegal?

**MR. WOLFF (Belfast, E.):** At the same time, I beg to ask the Chief Secretary whether, in consideration of the Irish Education Bill of last year substituting capitation grants in place of school fees, and in consideration of there being no provision made at present for payment of these grants, he will give the matter his earliest attention with a view of doing away with the great hardship now inflicted upon the National school teachers?

**\*MR. J. MORLEY:** With regard to this question, I have stated within the past week that the issue of the capitation grant awaits the passing of the Supplementary Estimates, and that payment will be made as soon as possible after the money becomes available.

#### OVERCROWDING IN RAILWAY TRAINS.

**MR. C. MORTON (Peterborough):** I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether there are any provisions of law against overcrowding in railway trains; and, if so, why they are not enforced, as they do in the case of overcrowding in tramcars and omnibuses?

**THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE (MR. MUNDELLA, Sheffield, Brightside):** Under the bye-laws adopted by the majority of the Railway Companies any passenger persisting in entering a compartment which is full, where any person objects to his entrance, renders himself liable to a penalty of 40s. But there is no provision inflicting a penalty upon a Railway Company in respect of overcrowding. It is far more difficult to prevent passengers who are anxious to start on their journey from entering one or other of the many carriages which compose a train than it is to prevent passengers from entering an omnibus or a tramcar.

#### COLLECTING FUNDS FOR MEN ON STRIKE.

**MR. SCHWANN (Manchester, N.E.):** I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether his attention has been drawn to the case of Henry Brierley, mentioned in *The Manchester Guardian* of 8th inst., who was locked up for parading the streets of Manchester with a brass band and soliciting dona-

tions from passers-by, and discharged on giving an undertaking not to commit the alleged offence again; is he aware that Brierley is the Chairman of No. 5 District of the Amalgamated Card and Blowing Room Operatives Association, and that he, and several other officials of that Association, were collecting funds for the men who had been locked out; and is it an offence for English operatives to collect voluntary contributions in the manner described, when it is not alleged that any riotous conduct took place or obstruction was caused?

MR. ASQUITH: I am in communication with the Magistrates with regard to Henry Brierley, but have not yet received their reply.

#### SWEETENED TOBACCO.

MR. WILLOX (Liverpool, Everton): (1) I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether it is lawful to import into this country tobacco of foreign manufacture artificially sweetened; and (2) whether British manufacturers are permitted to use sweetening matter in the manufacture of tobacco for home consumption?

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Sir W. HARCOURT, Derby): (1) Yes; sweetened cavendish and negrohead can be imported, but must be enclosed in a Customs' wrapper and an Import Duty paid; (2) Yes; in the manufacture of the above-mentioned tobacco. The operation has to be carried out under bond, and duty is charged on the finished article, which must be enclosed in a Customs' wrapper. I do not know whether without offence I might ask that in cases of this kind, not of urgent importance, gentlemen would give a day or two's notice of their questions. It is very difficult when notice is only given the night before to obtain the information required. That is the reason, perhaps, why we are obliged to ask to have some of the questions postponed. I have been able in this case, at great pains, to get the information. I am only asking that indulgence for the future.

#### MYOPIA AMONG SCHOOL CHILDREN.

MR. ROBERT WALLACE: I beg to ask the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education whether his attention has been called to a paragraph in *The Westminster Gazette*, in

which it is alleged that myopia, or short sight, is greatly on the increase, being fostered by malnutrition, by working and sewing in badly-lighted and badly-ventilated schoolrooms, and by reading badly-printed books; whether he can say what progress has been made in this inquiry into the number of children compulsorily receiving education in a state of starvation or excessive hunger; and if he will inquire whether there is ground for believing that the existing conditions of school life are favourable to the increase of myopia, and take such steps as may be competent to him for checking the evil?

THE VICE PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL (Mr. ACLAND, York, W.R., Rotherham): My attention has been called to the paragraph in question. The Department is doing its best to remove some of the alleged causes of short sight by insisting on improvements in ventilation and lighting where these are defective. A Circular shall be issued to the Inspectors, inviting their special attention to the question of badly-printed books. Some of the largest School Boards have been asked to give their opinion on the question of insufficient food and its effects on the educational progress of the children, and their answers may be expected shortly. I propose to make further inquiry, with the assistance of competent persons, into the question of defective vision in schools.

#### ZANZIBAR.

MR. ROBERT WALLACE: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether, and how soon, Papers will be laid upon the Table in connection with the recent slaughter of natives in Somaliland, and with the conduct of the acting Consul General of East Africa respecting the succession to the Sultanate of Zanzibar?

\*SIR E. GREY: No Report from the Company's agent has been communicated to us. It is presumed that he was too ill to write. Mr. Rodd, who afterwards visited Kismayu, has reported that all is quiet. Despatches respecting the events following the death of the Sultan of Zanzibar cannot be received for some weeks.

**MR. R. WALLACE :** Is the present Sultan the legal successor of the late Sultan ?

**SIR E. GREY :** I must ask for notice of that question.

**HER MAJESTY'S STATIONERY OFFICE.**

**MR. DALZIEL (Kirkcaldy, &c.) :** I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury if he can state the date on which a Circular was issued to the contractors for stationery binding to Her Majesty's Stationery Office, directing their compliance with the terms of the Resolution of the House of Commons of 13th February, 1891 ; whether he is aware that Messrs. Waterlow and Sons, although employing a number of vellum binders at the recognised scale of wages, employ youths and young men on Government work at wages varying from 18s. to 25s. per week, the minimum trade rate being 34s. ; and whether he proposes to take any action in the matter ?

**THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Sir J. T. HIBBERT, Oldham) :** The Circular in question was issued on the 9th February, 1892. I am not able to say whether the statement in the second paragraph is correct ; but, as the Resolution of the 13th February, 1891, does not appear to deal with the proportion of boy labour to be employed, I do not think that I can move in the matter.

**MR. DALZIEL :** Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that, since attention has been called to this matter, one of the firms concerned has dismissed a number of the men at a moment's notice ?

**SIR J. T. HIBBERT :** I am not aware of that.

**MR. FLYNN :** Has a Circular in similar terms been issued to Irish firms ?

**SIR J. T. HIBBERT :** Yes ; I have said so on several occasions.

**BAGOT STREET, BIRMINGHAM, WORKS.**

**MR. JESSE COLLINGS (Birmingham, Bordesley) :** I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War if he will state the amount of money which has been spent at the repairing shop, Bagot Street, Birmingham, during the present financial year ?

**\*MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN :** The exact figures cannot be given till the close of the year ; but it is estimated that

the expenditure at Bagot Street for wages will amount to about £17,500 for the current financial year.

**NETHER POPPLETON SCHOOL.**

**MR. GRANT LAWSON (York, N.R., Thirsk) :** I beg to ask the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education whether he is aware that an Order for the election of a School Board at Nether Poppleton, Yorkshire, was issued on 25th February without any notice of the intention of the Education Department to form that parish into a School Board district being given to the inhabitants ; whether such election is ordered to take place next Monday ; and whether he will suspend such election until some reasonable opportunity has been given for supplying any deficiency in the school accommodation by voluntary effort ?

**MR. ACLAND :** The managers of the Nether Poppleton School having given notice to the Department that they intended to close the school after the annual inspection, due this month, and there being no other school in the district, the Department issued an Order, on the 17th February, under Section 12 (2) of the Elementary Education Act, 1870, for the formation of a School Board. I understand that the election will take place on Monday next. Full notice was given to the managers of the school on 16th January that the Department intended to take this course, which is the usual one in the circumstances, and the managers stated in reply that they adhered to their determination to close the school. I see no reason to suspend the election of the School Board. There is nothing out of the ordinary course in the action of the Department.

**MR. GRANT LAWSON :** Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that the managers of the school are not inhabitants ?

**MR. ACLAND :** No ; I am not aware of that. But I do know that not much interest has been shown in educational matters there, and that the inhabitants will now have an opportunity of looking after the matter themselves.

**MR. GRANT LAWSON :** I shall call attention to the matter on the Estimates.

## THE NEW LABOUR CORRESPONDENT.

MR. FORWOOD (Lancashire, Ormskirk): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether, when selecting Mr. James Sexton as the Correspondent of the Board of Trade in Liverpool, in regard to the opinions of the artisans and labourers in that city, he was aware of the extreme views which that gentleman entertains as to the ownership of property by private individuals, the limitation of individual incomes, and the collective ownership of all means of production, as reported in the *Liverpool Courier* of 9th March; and whether the Reports of Labour Correspondents will be published by the Board of Trade as the opinions of themselves individually, or as representing the views of the working classes?

MR. MUNDELLA: I have no knowledge personally of Mr. Sexton's alleged opinions. The Local Correspondents of the Labour Department of the Board of Trade have been selected without reference to their political and economic opinions for the sole purpose of supplying information on specific points; and the *Labour Gazette* will publish facts of interest to workmen, and not the opinions held either by Local Correspondents or by any classes of the community.

MR. FORWOOD: Are these Correspondents to receive any remuneration?

MR. MUNDELLA: Certainly; from £15 to £20 a year, according to the work they have to perform.

## RIFLE RANGES.

CAPTAIN BAGOT (Westmoreland, Kendal): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War how many rifle ranges there are in the United Kingdom adapted to the extreme range of the magazine rifle?

\*MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: I am informed that there are 41 such ranges available for the Regulars and Militia and about 110 the property of Volunteer corps.

## THE SANDGATE SUBSIDENCES.

MR. AKERS-DOUGLAS (Kent, Canterbury): I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board whether he has yet received the Report of Mr. Walton, the Local Government Board Inspector, sent down to conduct the in-

quiry into the causes which led to the calamitous subsidence of land at Sandgate; and, if so, whether he is able to state the nature of such Report, or will he lay the Papers upon the Table of the House; whether it has been the usual practice when an inquiry involves so difficult and technical a question to send down two Inspectors; and whether it is intended to hold any further and more exhaustive inquiry?

\*MR. H. H. FOWLER: I have received the Report of Mr. Walton, the Local Government Board Inspector, who, at the request of the Local Board, visited Sandgate on Monday last. A copy of the Report has been sent to the Local Board, and I shall have no objection to lay the Report on the Table of the House if it is moved for. It has not been the practice in such a case to send two Inspectors. I do not contemplate any further inquiry with regard to the causes of the subsidences.

## EMPLOYMENT FOR DISCHARGED SOLDIERS.

MR. BROOKFIELD (Sussex, Rye): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War if he can inform the House what objections or difficulties exist to prevent the employment of discharged soldiers, or men of the Army Reserve, as clerks in the War Office and Departmental Headquarters, in the place of non-commissioned officers and men who are still receiving pay for serving with the colours?

\*MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: The men referred to—11 in number—are only temporarily employed; and it is more convenient to obtain them from regiments than to engage for short terms men who might otherwise obtain permanent employment elsewhere.

## RAILWAY RATES IN IRELAND.

COLONEL NOLAN (Galway, N.): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade if he can state if the rates for the carriage of whisky from Galway to Dublin have been increased by the Midland Great Western Railway Company of Ireland, and, if so, by how much? I also wish to ask the President of the Board of Trade if he is in correspondence with the Midland Great Western Railway Company of Ireland on the subject of their increase of charges?

**MR. MUNDELLA** : No, Sir ; I have received no specific statement as to the increase of rates for the carriage of whisky from Galway to Dublin by the Midland Great Western Railway Company of Ireland. I have, however, received several complaints generally of increases of rates on that line, and I am in communication with the company through the medium of the Railway Association. If the hon. and gallant Gentleman has any specific statements of increase I shall be glad, on receiving them, to ask for the company's explanations.

**COLONEL NOLAN** : I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury what are the total sums to be paid during the present financial year from the Treasury to the Midland Great Western Railway Company of Ireland for all purposes ?

**SIR J. T. HIBBERT** : I do not quite understand the question. Will the hon. and gallant Member postpone it for a few days, and supply me with further particulars of what he wants ?

#### INVERNESS-SHIRE SALMON FISHERIES.

**MR. MACGREGOR** (Inverness-shire) : I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury if the Commissioners of Woods and Forests have recently let a part of the Inverness-shire coast, in the district of Arisaig, to a party who has lined it with bag nets to intercept salmon on its way to the lochs and rivers, to the detriment of legitimate sport for anglers, and likely to cause a diminution of the supply, by preventing the fish reaching the breeding grounds ; and if due notification was given of the intention to let the coast for the purposes referred to ?

**\*SIR J. T. HIBBERT** : The salmon fishings *ex adverso* the estate of Arisaig are not let by the Commissioners of Woods, &c. They are claimed by the *ex adverso* proprietor. The salmon fishings opposite the adjoining estate of South Morar have been in lease from the Commissioners of Woods for some years. A fresh lease was granted last year, but the tenant is expressly bound to fish only by legal methods, and it is not known that he is fishing by any method not recognised by law. These fishings were let by tender after advertisement in the local newspapers.

**MR. MACGREGOR** : Will the right hon. Gentleman see that a stop is put to these illegal practices ? I shall call attention to the matter on the Estimates.

#### ALLEGED BOYCOTTING IN TIPPERARY.

**MR. T. W. RUSSELL** : I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that a regular system of boycotting of Protestants prevails in the neighbourhood of Cloughjordan, County Tipperary, necessitating the formation of a Defence Association to resist it ; and when the Lord Chief Baron recently congratulated the Grand Jury at Nenagh on the absence of boycotting in the North Riding of Tipperary, had he been made aware of the state of matters at Cloughjordan by the police authorities ?

**MR. P. J. O'BRIEN** (Tipperary, N.) : Before the right hon. Gentleman replies, may I ask if it is not a fact that the relations between the Roman Catholics and Protestants in the district are of the most friendly character ; and whether it was not the fact that in the town of Nenagh Protestants constitute a large majority of the tradesmen, that their principal supporters are Nationalists, and that their only complaint is that the local gentry sent to London for their supplies ?

**\*MR. J. MORLEY** : I understand generally, Sir, that the relations between the Roman Catholics and Protestants of North Tipperary are very much as the hon. Member for North Tipperary has described them. The Constabulary authorities inform me that there is no system of boycotting of Protestants prevailing at Cloughjordan. Some years ago partial boycotting was carried out in this locality against two emergency men on an evicted farm, and a shopkeeper in the village who supplied them with provisions, but this ceased in July, 1891. In November, 1892, after the General Election, a Defence Union was established at Cloughjordan, but I have no information as to its special objects. It has imported a blacksmith from Belfast without necessity. A trader named Williams stated that the local blacksmith refused to shoe his horse ; this the blacksmith denied, and expressed his willingness to work for him, but Williams declined to employ him any more.

**\*MR. T. W. RUSSELL:** Seeing that a deputation waited upon me in Dublin some weeks ago, will the right hon. Gentleman pay attention to the Memorial of those who are suffering from this boycotting, of which his police see nothing?

**MR. J. MORLEY:** Certainly.

**MR. JOHNSTON:** Has the right hon. Gentleman any evidence to show that this good relationship between the Roman Catholics and Protestants in this district has continued since the introduction of the Bill for the government of Ireland?

#### THE ROYAL IRISH CONSTABULARY.

**MR. T. W. RUSSELL:** I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether, since 22nd August, 1892, he has approved of any reduction in the extra police force, Royal Irish Constabulary; and, if so, in what county; and if he can state the actual strength of the Royal Irish Constabulary of all ranks in Ireland on 22nd August, 1892, and on the 1st March, 1893?

**\*MR. J. MORLEY:** A reduction in the extra force of County Kerry was advised by the present Government in October last, when 10 men were transferred from the extra force to fill vacancies in the free quota of the county. A proposal has been recently made and approved for reducing the extra force in County Sligo by three men, and in the South Riding of Tipperary by 15 men. The actual strength of the Constabulary of all ranks on August 22, 1892, was 12,299, and on the 1st inst. 12,302. The figures 19,299 and 12,302 include officers, head constables, sergeants, acting sergeants, and constables. The total of 11,860 given in reply to the hon. Member for Dover was the authorised strength of sergeants, acting sergeants, and constables only.

#### MURDERS IN KERRY.

**MR. T. W. RUSSELL:** I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland how many murders have taken place in the County of Kerry since 15th August, 1892; and whether anyone has been brought to justice in connection with these crimes?

**\*MR. J. MORLEY:** Two murders, both of them non-agrarian, have taken place in Kerry since the date mentioned. In one of these two men were arrested, one

of whom is now awaiting his trial at the next Assizes.

**SIR T. ESMONDE:** May I ask if there has been any diminution of offences under the Crimes Act since August last?

**MR. J. MORLEY:** According to the tabulated Reports, there has been a large decrease.

**MR. T. W. RUSSELL** asked under what category certain cases of murder (which he named) would be placed?

**MR. J. MORLEY:** I must ask the hon. Member to put these cases on the Paper.

#### THEFT OF COCOANUTS.

**MR. TANKERVILLE CHAMBERLAYNE** (Southampton): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether his attention has been drawn to the following case: That two children, aged 12 and 10, living at Totton, near Southampton, were apprehended for stealing two cocoanuts from a shop of the value of 4d.; that they were taken to an outhouse adjoining the police station and detained there through the night; and that their cries and entreaties to be taken home to their parents were heard by passers-by; and whether he will give instructions to the police with regard to juvenile offenders whose parents are well-known, and would be ready to guarantee their appearance before the Magistrates, that they be not taken out of their custody before conviction?

**MR. ASQUITH:** I have received a Report from the Justices' Clerk, who reports that three boys were taken into custody in consequence of a reported robbery. They were not put into an outhouse, but into a proper cell under the same roof as the police station, which is occupied by a police sergeant and his family. There was a fire in the guard-room and some rugs properly aired, and a bed made in the hall, where the boys slept that night, and within half an hour of their being in the cell they were asleep. Beyond one of the boys crying a little when the charge was read, they were perfectly quiet. The sergeant visited the cell at midnight, when they were still asleep. I understand that the practice in the Metropolitan Police where children are concerned is to



liberate them at once on bail, if anyone be willing to become surety. Should the children not have any friends, the officer on duty would send them to the workhouse till the morning. I should, myself, think it desirable, wherever it is possible consistently with the ends of justice, that children should not be taken out of the care of their parents before conviction, but considerable discretion must necessarily be left with the local police in dealing with particular cases.

#### MAIL HEAD-QUARTERS FOR WEST CLARE.

**MR. W. REDMOND** (for **MR. MAGUIRE**, Clare, W.): I wish to ask the Postmaster General whether he is prepared to consider the advisability of establishing Kilrush as mail headquarters for West Clare; and whether, in that case, considering the importance of Kilkee, he would send the Kilkee mails direct from Ennis, and so cause a considerable economy of time?

**MR. A. MORLEY**: The question of revising the postal service to these places is under consideration, but it involves negotiations with the West Clare Railway Company, as well as a careful examination of arrangements affecting a wide district, and some little time must, I think, elapse before I am in a position to decide upon the matter.

#### TELEGRAPHISTS IN CORK.

**MR. W. REDMOND**: I beg to ask the Postmaster General what reason, if any, there is that the wages of several junior telegraphists of the Cork Office have not been increased according to the Rules of the Department, and will he cause the arrears due to be paid immediately; is he aware that one female telegraphist made application for a revision of her wages over 12 months ago, and that the matter has not since been arranged, although she is in receipt of a less wage than several female officers who have been appointed since she was, and that she has received no increment whatever to her wages since 1891; and is he aware that a vacancy exists in the first class of telegraphists in the Cork Office since the revision of the 20th July, 1891; and will steps be taken to have the vacancy filled at once?

*Mr. Asquith*

**MR. A. MORLEY**: I am still without full particulars on the matters to which the hon. Member calls my attention; but there has clearly been some misunderstanding, and they shall be seen to at once, any increments of salary which may be found to be due being allowed without further delay. I may say that in the cases referred to in the first paragraph, the necessary authority was sent yesterday.

#### PUBLICATION OF THE HOME RULE BILL BY A NEWSPAPER.

**MR. W. REDMOND** (for **MR. MAGUIRE**): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether he is aware that a London evening paper has published the full text of the Bill for the Better Government of Ireland, and sold some 50,000 copies thereof at the price of 1d., and made large profits; and whether there is any copyright for the publications of the Queen's printers; and, if not, whether some provisions could not be introduced for the protection of the interests of the British taxpayer?

**MR. PARKER SMITH** (Lanark, Partick): Before the right hon. Gentleman answers, I should like to ask whether the price of the authorised version of the Bill is 3½d., what number of copies have been sold, and whether he sees his way to imitating this enterprising newspaper in the circulation of State Papers of great importance throughout the country?

**SIR J. T. HIBBERT**: I think the last question should be put on the Paper. It is manifestly impossible for me to answer it on such short notice. The question of copyright in Government publications is dealt with in the Treasury Minute of August 31, 1887 (Parliamentary Paper No. 335 of 1887). It appears to the Treasury that the reasons against restricting publication are no less strong in the case of Bills than in the case of Acts of Parliament, subject, of course, to the same condition as is insisted on in the latter case—namely, that except when published under the authority of the Government, they should not purport, on the face of them, to be published by authority. For this reason, without entering into the question whether there is or is not copyright in Bills or other public documents prepared for the Government, the Treasury do not

consider it necessary to move in the present case. I will go further, and say that I think we ought to be indebted to any newspaper which will publish the Bills either of the Government or of private Members.

#### DELAY IN TRANSMITTING A TELEGRAM.

**MR. WEIR** (Ross and Cromarty) : I beg to ask the Postmaster General why no information can be obtained from the Department in reply to inquiries as to the cause of delay (two hours, three minutes) in the transmission of a telegram of great urgency and of public interest from Balallan, Plockton, Ross-shire, to London, on the 1st ultimo; and whether he will make an effort to improve the organisation of the Inquiry Department of the Office?

**MR. A. MORLEY** : An official answer was sent to the hon. Member on the 7th instant (before the notice of his question appeared on the 8th instant) explaining that the delay of the message to which he refers was due to its length, to the fact that it had to be dealt with at several offices, and to a mistake having been made at one of these offices in counting the number of words. I do not think it necessary to take any steps to improve the organisation of the Inquiry Department of the Office.

#### STRIKERS SEEKING HELP.

**MR. SCHWANN** (Manchester, N.) : I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether his attention has been called to the statement in *The Middleton Guardian and Prestwich Advertiser* of 4th March, that at Bury eight men from Royton and Oldham were lately brought before the Magistrates for seeking help from their friendly neighbours during the strike which is now proceeding in the cotton districts of Lancashire; whether it is a fact that they were all found to be genuine operatives, and that four were playing musical instruments, whilst four collected from the charitable public; whether the Magistrates were correct in telling them that they were violating the law; and is it illegal for cotton operatives to play musical instruments in the streets, and to collect funds from passers-by?

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**MR. ASQUITH** : According to the newspaper account as reported in *The Bury Times* of March 1st, the men were ostensibly collecting alms for the Oldham operatives on strike, but admitted to the police officers when arrested that they did not give the money to any Union or Society, but shared it among themselves. Upon these facts the Magistrates were of opinion—I think rightly—that an offence had been committed against the “Vagrancy Act, 1824;” but believing that the men were not aware that they were breaking the law, they discharged them with a caution. There is no doubt that it is illegal for people to beg or gather alms for themselves in a public place.

**MR. KEIR-HARDIE** (West Ham, S.) : Before putting my question on the Paper I want to put one arising out of the answer just given. I wish to know if the right hon. Gentleman will cause the law to be enforced against organ-grinders and others as it is being enforced against operatives on strike in Lancashire?

**MR. ASQUITH** : Organ-grinders, in the Metropolis at any rate, are subject to special legislation. I think the law ought to be impartially enforced wherever it is broken.

**MR. J. BURNS** (Battersea) : May I ask if the right hon. Gentleman will enforce the law, which he says should be impartially administered, to the Hospital Saturday Collection in London and elsewhere?

**MR. ASQUITH** : The hon. Member will see that a distinction must be drawn. These men were convicted by the Magistrates of soliciting alms, not for a charitable purpose or for other persons, but for themselves.

#### ALLEGED INFRINGEMENT OF THE TRUCK ACT.

**MR. KEIR-HARDIE** : I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he is aware that on the 21st January, 1893, the Kellham Rolling Mill Company, Limited, Sheffield, sent a notice to each of their *employés*, signed by the secretary and manager, informing them that unless they joined the yard club they would be dismissed; whether such action infringes the provisions of the Truck Act; and what action he proposes to take in the matter?

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MR. ASQUITH : I must ask the hon. Member to postpone his question until Monday, when I hope to be in possession of the facts of the case.

ARABI PASHA.

MR. A. C. MORTON (Peterborough) : I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether his attention has been drawn to a letter in *The Daily Telegraph*, signed Clement Scott, respecting the health and condition of Arabi Pasha ; and whether the Government can see their way to allow Arabi Pasha and his fellow exiles to return to Egypt on the conditions mentioned in the letter referred to ?

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (MR. W. E. GLADSTONE, Edinburgh, Midlothian) : The facts stand thus : In June, 1891, there was an inquiry into the question of the health of the exiles in Ceylon. There was one of them with regard to whom it was found that a continued residence in the island was not desirable. A change was offered to him, but he refused it. The official Report with respect to the rest of the exiles says that on grounds of health there is no reason why they should be removed from Ceylon. The English Government do not feel themselves warranted in any way in endeavouring to over-rule the decision that Arabi Pasha ought not to be removed on grounds other than grounds of health. It should be borne in mind that when the sentences were originally pronounced on the exiles they only became inoperative on the condition of the exiles always remaining at a distance from Egypt.

MR. LABOUCHERE asked if it would require the assent of the Egyptian Government to remove the exiles from Ceylon to some other part of Her Majesty's dominions ?

MR. T. G. BOWLES : Is Arabi Pasha detained as a prisoner of war ?

MR. W. E. GLADSTONE : The subject of Arabi's detention has been the subject of discussion in this House before, and I do not propose to re-open it. With reference to the question of the hon. Member for Northampton, I apprehend that this subject can be considered without any reference to the Government of Egypt, but I am not

aware that there are any grounds for taking this particular matter into consideration at the present time.

#### THE PROGRESS OF BUSINESS.

MR. BURNIE (Swansea Town) : I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether, in order to expedite legislation with respect to Bills on Labour and other questions, he will after three days' Debate endeavour to secure a Division on the Second Reading of the Government of Ireland Bill, providing he receives a requisition urging this signed by a majority of the Members of this House ?

MR. WOODS (Lancashire, Ince) : I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether in the face of the very slow progress that is being made with the Government measures now before Parliament, and others which have been promised dealing with labour and social questions ; and whether, with a view of preventing unnecessary discussion on the Bill for the Better Government of Ireland, Her Majesty's Government will fix a day on which they propose to take a Division on the Second Reading of that Bill ?

MR. W. E. GLADSTONE : I am sensible of the strong sense of hon. Members as to the progress of Public Business which is indicated in the questions, but, notwithstanding, I do not think it would be wise or justifiable on the part of the Government to accede to the proposal now made. There ought to be a reasonable amount of time given for the discussion of the Government of Ireland Bill.

#### THE CONGESTED DISTRICTS BOARD'S INQUIRIES.

SIR THOMAS ESMONDE : I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland if he can state the result of the Congested Districts Board's inquiries into the various proposals which have been submitted to them for the development of the fishing industry in West Kerry, and the decisions, if any, at which they have arrived in each case ?

\*MR. J. MORLEY : The Board have decided to construct a landing-quay at Brandon Creek, and the work will be

put in hand at once. Other proposals for the development of the fishing industry in West Kerry are under consideration by the Board.

#### THE CARRIAGE OF IRISH BUTTER.

SIR THOMAS ESMONDE: I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade if his attention has been called to a resolution unanimously passed at an important meeting of butter merchants from the South of Ireland, recently held at Limerick Junction, in which they complain of the ill-treatment of packages of Irish butter by the carrying companies, and call upon these companies to take such precautions as will ensure the delivery of Irish butter in England in as good a condition as foreign butters; and whether he will bring the matter to the attention of the Railway and Steamship Companies concerned, so as to secure the proper carriage of Irish butter?

MR. MUNDELLA: No, Sir; I have not received any complaint in the matter referred to by the hon. Baronet. If any substantial grievance is brought under my notice I will communicate with the Railway and Steamship Companies concerned, but consignors have ample remedies against carrying companies who ill-treat their merchandise.

#### THE IRISH MAIL SERVICE.

MR. MAURICE HEALY: I beg to ask the Postmaster General whether it is now the practice in cases where special mail trains are sent from Queenstown for Kingstown to keep the special mails at Kingsbridge or Westland Row until the ordinary mail is being sent to Kingstown; whether the special mails were formerly in such cases sent on immediately to Kingstown, so that no time might be lost on the arrival of the ordinary mail in transferring the mails from train to steamer; and whether the present practice involves considerable delay in effecting the transfer on the arrival of the ordinary mail, with the result that the steamer is delayed in starting?

\*MR. A. MORLEY: The hon. Member has accurately stated the case. The present arrangement does occasionally cause delay to the passenger traffic; and I will consider whether a satisfactory plan can be adopted for sending forward

the American mails specially from Kingsbridge in advance of the ordinary mail train, whenever that course may obviate material delay.

#### SAVING DROWNING PERSONS.

MR. MACDONA (Southwark, Rotherhithe): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he has seen an account of an inquest held at Guy's Hospital on the 7th instant upon the body of a young woman who had been rescued alive from the Thames by the efforts of a Rotherhithe lighterman, named Robert Burrige, but that the Coroner disallowed Robert Burrige the ordinary fee, usual in such cases, because the woman was rescued alive; and will he bring in a Bill to amend the law in such a way that watermen and lightermen and others anxious to save persons from drowning would receive the same reward as if they had waited until life was extinct?

MR. ASQUITH: As the fee referred to as the ordinary fee is one for bringing a dead body on shore which may be found in a navigable river, I do not see how the Coroner could, in this case, have authorised its payment. I am not prepared to propose legislation for the purpose of offering rewards to people who save lives.

#### NEWFOUNDLAND—THE TREATIES BILL.

MR. J. W. LOWTHER (Cumberland, Penrith): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies whether it is the intention of the Newfoundland Government to submit afresh to the Legislature the Treaties Bill, rejected on the 13th May, 1892?

SIR E. GREY (in the absence of Mr. S. BUXTON): Her Majesty's Government learn by telegraph that a Joint Committee of both Houses has presented a Report, the substance of which will be found in *The Daily News* of yesterday. That Report has still to be considered by the Legislature, and is believed to be now under their consideration.

#### CONVEYANCE OF ADULTS BY INDIAN AND IMPERIAL TROOPSHIPS.

MR. FORWOOD (Lancashire, Ormskirk): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty if he will state the maximum number of adults conveyed on any one voyage from the United Kingdom within the past five years, including

crew, by any of the Indian troopships and the Imperial troopships *Orontes*, *Himalaya*, and *Tyne*? I also beg to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty what is the gross and net register tonnage, according to Board of Trade Rules, of the *Malabar*, *Tyne*, *Orontes*, and *Himalaya*, respectively?

SIR U. KAY-SHUTTLEWORTH: The numbers are as follows:—Indian troopships, 1,703 adults; *Orontes*, 1,360; *Himalaya*, 1,385; *Tyne*, 602. The following is the tonnage of each ship: Gross tonnage—*Malabar*, 4,499; *Tyne*, 2,091; *Orontes*, 3,705; and *Himalaya*, 3,071. Net tonnage—*Malabar*, 2,715; *Tyne*, 1,265; *Orontes*, 2,271; *Himalaya*, 2,079.

#### ANALYSIS OF BEER.

VISCOUNT CURZON (Bucks, Wycombe): I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many samples of beer were analysed during the past year; how many were found to be adulterated with noxious ingredients; and, in any samples of beer found to be adulterated, what were the noxious ingredients?

SIR W. HARCOURT: There were 2,044 samples of beer analysed, for the detection of adulteration, during the past financial year. In no case was the existence of a noxious ingredient found.

#### LIGHTSHIP AND LIGHTHOUSE COMMUNICATION.

MR. JAMES LOWTHER (Kent, Thanet): I wish to put a question to the President of the Board of Trade which is virtually a repetition of a question I put yesterday. I desire to know whether he intends longer to delay action on the Report of the Commission on Electrical Communication between Lightships and Lighthouses; and whether the right hon. Gentleman is aware that the Commissioners estimate that £8,000 would be required to carry out the work; and whether, having regard to the fact that grave disasters, involving great loss of life, have been attributed to absence of these communications, and to the fact that the Commissioners attach importance to this work being immediately carried out apart from the rest of the Report, the right hon. Gentleman will give an assurance that this work will be immediately carried out?

*Mr. Forwood*

MR. MUNDELLA: The right hon. Gentleman said he wished to ask the same question he put to me yesterday. This is not the question of yesterday. If he will put it on the Paper I will answer it.

#### GOVERNMENT OF IRELAND BILL.

MR. J. CHAMBERLAIN (Birmingham, W.): Sir, I beg to present Petitions from meetings of burgesses of St. Paul's and of All Saints', in the Western Division of Birmingham, declaring that the Government of Ireland Bill, if it should become law, would imperil the unity of the United Kingdom, would expose many of Her Majesty's loyal subjects in Ireland to the fear of unjust treatment, would provoke in Ireland grave discontent dangerous to the public peace, and would unfairly increase the burdens of the taxpayers of Great Britain, and they pray the House to reject the measure.

#### RAILWAY RATES.

COLONEL NOLAN: I beg to ask you, Mr. Speaker, why a certain class of questions is not allowed to appear on the Paper? I wish to ask you if you have ruled that it is not in Order for a Member to place on the Paper questions which name the old railway rates which Railway Companies charge and the new rates the companies are now charging?

\*MR. SPEAKER: The hon. and gallant Member handed in a question yesterday which contained a request for information as to whether a great number of specific rates were charged by a particular Railway Company. I informed him that I thought it was a very dangerous precedent to set, inasmuch as any hon. Member might thereafter ask whether such and such were the rates charged by a particular company, and that it would be far better for him to submit a specific case to the Government who had the matter in hand, when, no doubt, the facts would be inquired into. Of course, if the hon. and gallant Gentleman wishes to put a question of that description the whole of the rates of a Railway Company, as to the carriage of coal and iron from the North, might be set out and inquired into in the form of a question. The purpose of a question is to ask for information, and not to supply it to the House.

## PUBLIC BUSINESS.

MR. BARTLEY (Islington, N.): I wish to ask the right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury whether, in the event of a Saturday Sitting, the Debate under the Standing Order will end at 12 o'clock; and whether he will undertake not to suspend the Standing Order, so that hon. Members may not go on into Sunday with the Estimates?

MR. W. E. GLADSTONE: There is no question of suspending the Twelve o'clock Rule.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: Perhaps it would be convenient if I were to ask the right hon. Gentleman, in the event—I hope the improbable event—of the House assenting to a Saturday Sitting, what is the business he proposes to take?

MR. W. E. GLADSTONE: I will not follow the example of the right hon. Gentleman, but will say, in the probable event of a Sitting on Saturday, we propose to proceed with Supply.

MR. JAMES LOWTHER: Which class of Estimates?

MR. W. E. GLADSTONE: That must depend upon what is done to-day.

## MOTIONS.

## SITTING OF THE HOUSE (SATURDAY.)

Motion made, and Question proposed:

"That this House do sit To-morrow; that the provisions of Standing Order No. 56 be extended to that Sitting; and that as soon as Government Business is disposed of Mr. Speaker do adjourn the House without Question put."—(*Mr. W. E. Gladstone.*)

[The right hon. Gentleman at once left the House.]

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: If the course the Government ask us to adopt is, as I shall presently show, unusual, certainly the method by which it is recommended to our notice is still more unusual. One would really suppose, from the procedure of the Prime Minister in merely contenting himself with touching his hat when his name was called by the Speaker, that he was suggesting an every-day procedure, and one to which this House is accustomed, under circumstances similar to these in which we now find ourselves, and which the House of Commons ought to adopt merely at the nod of one powerful Minister. The right hon. Gentleman, I suppose, is going to return?

SIR W. HARCOURT: I desire to offer an explanation. The Prime Minister is summoned at this moment to attendance on the Queen. That is the reason why he has left the House.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: The reason given by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, I need hardly say, is adequate and satisfactory, but what is not quite satisfactory is that the Prime Minister should not, before he went away, have delegated to the Chancellor of the Exchequer the duty of defending and recommending to the House the Resolution which he has moved. Now, how many precedents are there for asking the House at this time of the Session, and in this condition of Supply, to sit on a Saturday? I speak now for a large number of hon. Gentlemen who have for the first time become Members of the House in the last election. They perhaps will not feel as keenly as older Members of the House what an extraordinary strain is put upon the House of Commons by the request at this time of the year, and in this condition of Supply, to sit on a Saturday, not apparently, as on a Wednesday, from 12 to 6 o'clock, but from 12 to any hour which it may please the Government to keep the discussion going. That proceeding inflicts, if the House assents to it, very great hardship on Members. It inflicts an even greater hardship on persons who, in the nature of the case, cannot make their position clear in this House, but whose convenience we are bound to remember. On the permanent officials of the House is thrown, by the ordinary course of Parliamentary proceeding, a very great, a very constant, and a very continuous strain, and that strain would be greatly augmented by requiring them to perform the unusual duty of remaining here for an indefinite time on Saturday. Though I do not for one moment doubt that they would willingly and cheerfully do any duty which this House might throw upon them, yet we on our side must recollect we ought not to throw that duty on them unless some great and paramount reason can be shown for it. Certainly no reason has been shown—good, bad, or indifferent. But we can for ourselves form some estimate of the necessity under which the Government find themselves with regard to business. What is their necessity? The Government are bound in obedience to

the law to see that a certain amount of Supply, the Supplementary Estimates, a Vote on Account, and certain Votes for the Army and Navy are passed through the House in sufficient time for the various stages of the Appropriation Bill to be dealt with here and elsewhere, so that all the financial business may be completed by March 31. That is the necessity, and, so far as I am aware, the sole necessity, under which the Government labour, and out of these circumstances arises, if it arises at all, the justification for this extraordinary course. If my recollection serves me right, we began to consider the Supplementary Estimates last Thursday. We had some other business that night. I do not recollect what, but the time was occupied almost until you, Sir, left the Chair at dinner-time; so that we had half a night on Thursday. Friday was an afternoon sitting, and we therefore had but a brief interval between a quarter or half-past 3 and the time when the House rises at 10 minutes to 7. On the third day we had the Navy Estimates, and on the fourth the Army Estimates, and that is absolutely the whole length of time up to the present period of the Session that we have been occupied in discussing Supply. Now, with regard to the Supplementary Estimates, the total number of hours given to Supply has been 18, and, to be very precise, 35 minutes. That is the precise time the Government have accorded to us for discussing the Estimates. Of that, as I say, only a part of one afternoon and part of one evening have been devoted to Supplementary Estimates. Can it be pretended for one moment that the discussions upon the Army or Navy Estimates have been unduly prolonged? Have they not even been curtailed more than perhaps is right from the point of view of a thorough discussion of some great questions brought before us? Upon the Navy Estimates one night was spent before you, Sir, left the Chair. During the whole of that discussion—a long and important discussion—a discussion which, I must remind the House, was carried on principally by hon. Members who support the Government, not one single syllable was said either about the condition of the Navy or about the naval policy of the Government. The time was occupied, and solely occupied, from the moment the Debate began until the

moment it concluded with most important labour questions—questions which, while they had a great deal to do with labour, had nothing whatever to do with the Navy or the naval strength of this country. Perhaps unwisely, but with a full desire to help the Government with their business, we raised no objection to your leaving the Chair on Monday night. The result of that was that when we came to discuss the Vote before the Committee next day the Chairman by his ruling—no doubt, absolutely correctly—cut out various hon. Gentlemen on this side who had very important general questions to bring forward. So much for the discussion on the Navy Estimates. How about the Army Estimates? That discussion was not listened to by so full a House as I have now the honour of addressing, but every man who listened to that Debate, be his politics what they may, will admit that no Debate by more competent speakers, more full of solidly compacted matter, or more closely addressed to vital questions of military policy, was ever carried on in this House. Can it be said that the Debate was unduly prolonged? In one sense it was, because the Government, in deliberate violation of their pledges, and without any regard to their word, a course which, I confess, I never recollect any responsible Ministry being guilty of before, failed themselves to move the adjournment of the Debate soon after 12 o'clock. I do not wish to raise that point again. Whether the Government were or were not to blame in the matter, it will be admitted that a Debate more worthy of the dignity of the House and a Debate less open to a charge of obstruction never took place. I have now brought the proceedings in Supply up to the present moment. We have had 18 hours 35 minutes given to Supply, and now, with 10 days at least—so far as my calculation goes—separating us from the time when, in obedience to the law, the Government will have to close Supply, they ask us and the officers of the House to put ourselves to the inconvenience, and worse than inconvenience, of a Saturday Sitting. I call it worse than inconvenience for the reason that a Saturday Sitting, though a painful necessity towards the end of the Session, is never a good occasion on which to carry on a serious Debate. Plans are made by Members of this House long

before, and are legitimately and properly made, which make it extremely inconvenient to them to be in their places on Saturday. The Government come down on Thursday afternoon, and then for the first time their intentions are made known. Under such circumstances, the House that meets on a Saturday is a thin House when most valuable Members are necessarily absent, and when it is impossible to carry on adequately the discussion of important questions with advantage. In these circumstances, it may well seem that the course which the Government are pursuing is an arbitrary attempt to coerce the minority wholly without explanation or justification. I should have thought that it never could have been the interest of any Government to bring themselves into collision so early, at all events, with the declared wish of a minority not contemptible in its numbers. I can only conjecture from what has dropped from the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Prime Minister that they are influenced in suggesting this astonishing course to us, not in the least by the desire to get through the Business of Supply within the legal term, not in the least with the view of carrying out those duties which we all admit are imposed upon us by the law in regard to financial questions, but simply and solely by the fact that they have committed themselves to the policy of reading the Home Rule Bill a second time before Easter. For that reason, and for no other, they are endeavouring to trample upon the liberties of the House of Commons. Well, Sir, every Government naturally and properly desires to get on with its business; I do not quarrel with them on that account; but they must surely be aware that if ever there was a measure on which the minority had a right to ask that full time should be given them and their constituents for consideration it is the Home Rule Bill. I doubt whether you will find any precedent of a measure of first-class importance and of a controversial character of which the Second Reading was really completed by the 26th or 27th of March. The British Constitution alone, among the Constitutions of the world, has amongst its provisions nothing to check rash changes and unwise experiments. Our Constitution alone is not protected by exceptional majorities, by

plans requiring the assent of two-thirds or requiring a *plébiscite*, or by any other devices by which all other nations have guarded the essential principles of their Constitutions. I do not ask, at all events, at this moment for any alteration of that state of things, but I do say that it is required of those who are responsible for the government of the country, of those into whose guardianship for the moment is consigned this precious trust, to see that great changes are not rushed upon an unwilling people, and that great minorities in this House are not driven and coerced in the manner in which this Government is attempting to coerce us. Sir, even that does not exhaust the reasons which make it—I will not content myself with the word *expedient*—indecent for the Government to follow the course they are pursuing. I asked this afternoon, on behalf of my right hon. Friend the Member for Bristol (Sir M. Hicks-Beach), when the blank Schedules in the Home Rule Bill will be filled up, and the answer I received was that one of them would be filled up on the day when the Bill was read a second time, and the other on some later and wholly unspecified day.

MR. J. MORLEY: I said probably immediately afterwards, if not at the same time.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: Well, what are these Schedules? They concern the future position of the Royal Irish Constabulary and the great Civil Service of Ireland, and are we going to be asked to read the Bill a second time before we know what the Government propose with regard to these great Bodies? Do not the Government know that, in addition to all the other objections we have to this measure, in addition to all the great Constitutional objections which we have, we fear that it may result in the betrayal of those great services of the police and the Civil Service, to whom we are bound by every consideration of honour? And yet we are to be kept in ignorance of the way in which they are to be treated until the Bill has been read a second time. If anything could add to the outrageous proceedings of the Government it would surely be their *laches* in not giving us their full scheme. They do not know their own scheme themselves, and yet we are expected to be in a position to discuss it fully on the Second Reading.



I cannot help still hoping when the Chancellor of the Exchequer recollects, in the first place, the hardship and inconvenience which will be inflicted on the Members and officials of this House by a Saturday Sitting; when he considers, in the second place, the very brief period hitherto devoted to Supply; and, in the third place, the difficulty which he himself will be placed in if he attempts to drive the Second Reading down our throats, he will pause in the career he apparently is bent upon. He perhaps has not fully realised the position in which he and his Party stand. He represents a majority of this House; he represents a minority of Great Britain. I can tell him, as far as I am justified in speaking for the majority of Great Britain, that in the case of a Bill which so vitally affects our interests, we shall not allow ourselves to be coerced by any majority of the House.

SIR W. HARCOURT: I do not think it is necessary that I should reply to the separatist arguments of the right hon. Gentleman. This classification of majorities and minorities, according to their geographical position, was I understood one of the things which he most loudly condemned. However, I pass that by. I am not at all prepared to deny that the proposal we make imposes a great strain on the House. I do not deny, on the contrary I assert, that it imposes a great hardship on the House, and on the officers of the House; but what this House has to consider, and what the country has to consider, is the call which is made upon us, and at whose door lies the responsibility. [*Ministerial cheers and counter cheers from the Opposition.*] I am very glad that the challenge is taken up. That is exactly the issue we desire to put forward. The right hon. Gentleman, with a skilful innocence, made a speech which would imply that everybody was ignorant of what had been taking place in this House—I may say, without desiring to be guilty of any breach of confidence, what has been taking place out of the House. The right hon. Gentleman said that plans are made by hon. Members. Yes; plans have been made by hon. Members, and they have transpired, and I think everybody is aware of them. The right hon. Gentleman spoke of the declared wishes of the minority. We

know what the declared wishes of the minority are; that they shall occupy the time of the House in a manner which shall prevent certain measures coming under the consideration of the House. Those are the plans which have been made by hon. Members opposite; those are the declared wishes of the minority, and the question for the House to determine is whether the majority of this House are going to allow those plans and declared wishes of the minority to overcome the majority of this House. The right hon. Gentleman spoke with great fervour and great warmth of the “monstrous” proposal of the Government to give so short an interval between the First and Second Reading of the Home Rule Bill as that proposed by the Prime Minister. Now, while the right hon. Gentleman was speaking, I ascertained—I believe accurately—what took place in the year 1886. The figures given to me are, I think, important and instructive on this point. In the year 1886 Home Rule was a new question—a new question to the House, and still more a new question to the country. Since that time it has been more or less—I do not say in all its details [*Opposition laughter*—I do not see what reason hon. Gentlemen find for hilarity. I always thought that details were for Committee. I was going to add that the question of the principle of Home Rule has been under the consideration of the country for seven years. In 1886 I am informed the Bill was laid on the Table on the 13th of April, and the Debate on the Second Reading commenced on the 10th of May.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: When was Easter in that year?

SIR W. HARCOURT: Well, it seems to me that argument is against the right hon. Gentleman. However, if I may be allowed to continue what I was going to say, without any objection whatever from the opponents of Home Rule, with the support, I imagine, of gentlemen who at that time dissented from the Liberal Party, the Second Reading Debate commenced. Well, what is the proposal now? The corresponding period was February 17th this year, and the day when the Prime Minister proposes to take the Second Reading of his present Bill is March 16th, which gives either exactly the same, or a little more than the

interval given in 1886. Now, is that a proposal so unreasonable and so monstrous as the right hon. Gentleman suggests? In my opinion, the whole of that part of the argument of the right hon. Gentleman falls to the ground. [*Opposition laughter.*] That is an arithmetical proposition which it is impossible to deny or, I should have thought, to deride. The right hon. Gentleman has spoken about the time that has been occupied, and that it is proposed to occupy, in Supply, and has referred to the Debate last night on the Army Estimates in terms in regard to which I join issue with him. He made a charge that ought not to be made without much stronger reasons than he could allege—namely, that there was a breach of faith. What are the facts? It was stated, when the Twelve o’Clock Rule was suspended, that this would not be used for a protracted Sitting. What was in contemplation was exactly what had taken place on the Navy Estimates the night before—namely, that we should go on till about half-past 12. Some interesting speeches of great importance extended rather longer than were expected, and as a matter of fact the Debate, instead of concluding at half-past 12, continued until a quarter to 1. Those, Sir, are the facts upon which the right hon. Gentleman founds a charge of the most serious character—namely, that of our having broken faith with the House of Commons. I strongly repudiate the charge. The right hon. Gentleman has complained of the short time that has been given, and is intended to be given, to Supply. He says there are 10 days more which may be given to that subject. Why are 10 days more to be given to Supply?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: Because it is necessary.

SIR W. HARCOURT: I quite agree with the right hon. Gentleman that there is no necessity whatever to give 10 days further time to Supply except to carry out those plans to which I have alluded and to fulfil the declared wishes of the minority. Now let us see what were the number of days given to Supply in the presence of that factious Opposition which has now become a majority, and with a Government in power to which I am sure the right hon. Gentleman will admit every consideration was extended during

the last Parliament. [*Opposition cries of "Oh!"*]

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: It was an inconsiderate opposition.

SIR W. HARCOURT: Well, let us see whether it was an inconsiderate Opposition. These are the whole number of days which were given to Supply before Easter in the years I will name:—In 1887 there were nine days; in 1888, four days; in 1889, nine days; in 1890, six days; in 1891, seven days; and in 1892, ten days, which was the highest number recorded.

MR. JACKSON (Leeds, N.): The right hon. Gentleman does not include February.

SIR W. HARCOURT: Those are the figures which are supplied to me, and which I believe are correct.

MR. JACKSON: Those figures do not include February. The right hon. Gentleman has only got the number of days in the month of March. He will, I think, find that those numbers are not in accordance with the figures presented to the House as to the number of days occupied in Supply.

SIR W. HARCOURT: No, they give the number of days given to the Supplementary Votes and Excess Votes. [*"Oh!"*] Well, that is the very point. We must compare like with like. I am not speaking of the Estimates for next year, but of those that must be taken before Easter. If you wish to compare something else, do it by all means; but I am comparing the Votes which are in question, the Supplementary and Excess Votes, the first Army Vote for the year, the first Navy Vote for the year, and the Civil Service Vote on Account. Well, what is the present situation? We have already devoted six days to Supply—from February 25 to March 9—four days in Supply, and two days on going into Supply. [*"No, no!"*] Really hon. Members should allow me to speak. They can reply to me if they wish later on. We had, I say, four days in Supply and two days going into it. We propose, taking into account the date my right hon. Friend has mentioned for the Second Reading of the Home Rule Bill, to give at least 10, or it may be 12, days to the same purpose for which in former years the number has been given which I have quoted. There is no reason why more days should be given to this

purpose on the present occasion than have been given in the last six years. We know what the reason is according to the Opposition. It is one which the right hon. Gentleman took care not to state. Nobody can say that there is anything in these Estimates which require a longer time than in previous periods. You have had two days' Debate on the Naval Estimates, and they are not concluded yet. Everybody knows why you want so much time to discuss the Estimates this year. Everybody knows that the object is a very different one, and we object to the right hon. Gentleman laying deliberate plans to prevent the progress of Business in this House. I have endeavoured to state the matter fairly. We have given the maximum time for Supply, and we consider it ample for the purpose. That is an answer to the points brought forward by the right hon. Gentleman. All this pretence of discussing the Estimates is a pretence that deceives nobody. The right hon. Gentleman has said that his Party have a powerful minority. I do not deny that. What we object to is that this powerful minority should lay down deliberate plans to delay the Business of the House. In our opinion the duty of a majority in the House towards that majority in the country which it represents is to use such measures as are absolutely necessary to defeat these tactics. We believe that it is of immense interest to Parliament and to the country that this great issue of Home Rule should be joined at the earliest period, and we believe there will be abundance of time for bringing this matter under the consideration of Parliament and of the country, and great as the inconvenience may be, and great as is the sacrifice—and I admit it is a sacrifice—which we are asking not only from gentlemen opposite, but from gentlemen who support us, we ask them to assist us in forwarding the Business of the country against what we can only regard as a deliberate attempt to delay it.

MR. J. CHAMBERLAIN (Birmingham, W.): The House is indebted very much to my right hon. Friend for the clearness with which he has put the issue before it. This miserable minority of 315 knows what is in store for it if the Government have their way. My right hon. Friend commenced with a statement in which I

am very glad to be able to agree with him, that the proposal of the Government would put an immense strain upon the House and its officials, and would be the cause of hardship. I should have thought that under those circumstances my right hon. Friend would have felt that, before putting that strain upon the House, he would have to show some great emergency. Where is the great emergency? We have spent a few days in Supply, and, as has been said, there is ample time before the legal period by which Supply must be granted to carry the remaining Votes in Supply, and my right hon. Friend, I suppose, will not tell the House that he or his colleagues are in any fear that we should interpose to prevent the fulfilment of those legal obligations. Up to the present time it is impossible for him or anyone to say there has been any undue discussion on the Estimates. Why we are penalised is not for anything we have done, but for an offence which my right hon. Friend attributes to us an intention of committing. He has found in the newspapers, apparently, reports of plans which have caused him to produce this Coercive Resolution. I should have thought my right hon. Friend by this time would not have been inclined to pay too much attention to newspaper reports. We also have seen newspaper reports. We have seen it stated that my right hon. Friend proposes to do away altogether with the Easter holidays, and we have seen another report that he and his Colleagues propose to carry over Supply beyond the legal period, and then to seek for an indemnity from Parliament. We have not thought it worth while—we have not thought it dignified—to pay any attention to these reports and rumours, and I think my right hon. Friend might have waited, at all events, until he had some evidences of these intentions which he now attributes to us. The right hon. Gentleman has laid before the House an account of the number of days which on previous occasions were occupied in Supply. I believe the right hon. Gentleman is misinformed, and that, omitting the year 1890, which was exceptional, the average gives us over eight days for the past five years. Up to the present time we have spent only 18 hours in Supply. Would it not be better to wait until we have got somewhat nearer the average of eight days, which he

*Sir W. Harcourt*

admits to be a perfectly reasonable time, before proposing such a Resolution as the one which is under consideration? My right hon. Friend says that a great deal of time has been spent upon the Naval Estimates. I believe the average time spent upon the Naval Votes in previous years has been two days.

SIR W. HARCOURT: Once in 13 years.

MR. J. CHAMBERLAIN: One day! Then the average has been one day for the Naval Estimates; and on all those occasions the time has been entirely occupied in the discussion of naval policy. So that in dealing with the Naval Estimates, we must bear in mind the exceptional circumstances which have occupied one of the days attributed to this Vote in the discussion of a matter which has nothing to do with the naval policy. What time has been taken on past occasions upon the Army Estimates? I believe three days have been given to the first Votes in the Army Estimates. Will anyone say that up to the present time one single question has been introduced to the attention of the House in regard to the Naval Estimates which was not worthy the attention of the House? My right hon. Friend, with the most child-like ingenuousness, asked what is there in the Supplementary Estimates which will justify any long discussion. The Government have been in possession of power for seven months. We have had absolutely no opportunity of questioning them or criticising them, or of calling them to account, and now, when we have an opportunity of raising questions of such vital importance as, for instance, that of the Evicted Tenants Commission or the expedition to Uganda, and other matters which are raised by the Supplementary Estimates, does my right hon. Friend pretend to tell us that we cannot raise these questions without laying ourselves open to the charge of a deliberate intention to delay the proper business of the Government? There is not the slightest pretence, up to the present time at any rate, for saying that the Opposition have shown that intention in criticising the Estimates, and nothing but the growing intolerance of the majority who, having given up coercing Ireland, have taken up in its place the idea of coercing the

minority of this House—nothing, I say, but their intolerance would justify any such insinuation. But the right hon. Gentleman says we must go behind the time spent upon the Estimates. We are not to consider, apparently—that is the position of a Member of the Government—whether any matter arising out of the Estimates or whether the discussions which we raise are worthy the attention of this House. We take only into account the evident fact that it is our desire, and therefore our intention as far as we have the power, to prevent the Second Reading of the Home Rule Bill before Easter. The right hon. Gentleman made great pretence of exposing this plot—this conspiracy. Why, his exposure was not necessary. We are, none of us, ashamed to avow openly in this House that we think it a most discreditable and most outrageous proceeding on the part of the Government to take a Bill of this kind, brought in under the circumstances in which it has been introduced to the House and the country, before Easter, and before we can have the opportunity which we desire of conferring with our constituents upon the matter. The right hon. Gentleman goes back to 1886, when, as he says, the First Reading was taken on the 8th of March, and the Second Reading on the 10th of April. Yes; but he omitted to say that in the interval the Easter holidays, nearly a fortnight, took place, and that in that interval many Members of the House had most valuable opportunities of conferring with their constituents; and perhaps the right hon. Gentleman has forgotten that the result was materially affected by these opportunities. We claim in the first place our Constitutional right to discuss the Estimates at reasonable length, and to deal with all questions which are worthy of the attention of the House, and we are not going to be curtailed in our rights even by the most arbitrary Government that has ever sat upon those Benches. And, further, we claim by this Debate and by many others of the same kind—to which, perhaps, the right hon. Gentleman looks forward with pleasure and satisfaction—we claim to show to the country that it is the avowed intention of the Government to rush through this Bill, which would be rejected by the good sense of the people if they had time for considering its provisions.

MR. LABOUCHERE (Northampton): The right hon. Gentleman who has just sat down has submitted a very extraordinary doctrine to the Government. It is that they should shut the stable door after the steed is stolen. We read the other day in *The Times*, which I presume is the official organ of the Opposition, a full report of the meeting which had taken place at the Carlton Club. We read there that the Tory Party were brought together and urged to obstruct as much as they possibly could. What has now occurred? Why, a Liberal Unionist is put up to say it cannot be true, because he was not there. No doubt when there is a Liberal Unionist meeting reported, some Conservative will be put up to say that as he was not there it cannot be correct. The right hon. Gentleman says there was to be no obstruction upon the Supplementary Estimates. I know something about obstruction. I have felt it my duty sometimes to—it might, invidiously, be called—obstruct the action of the late Government when I thought they were rushing the country over a precipice. I declare, having a knowledge of the matter, that there has been obstruction upon the Estimates already. I am bound to tell right hon. Gentlemen and hon. Gentlemen of the Unionist persuasion that I never yet saw obstruction so badly and so inartistically practised. Why, we had two hours with the Chairman of Committees in the Chair, about the place where the new bar was to be put outside in the Lobby. The artistic way would have been to have put up some gentleman to protest against there being any bar at all, and to have raised a discussion on the whole question of temperance. You must manage—and I tell you in the most friendly way—you must manage to be plausible and to get some principle underlying your obstruction. But, as I have said, you have done it in the most inartistic fashion. The right hon. Gentleman who has just spoken has frankly admitted that he and his friends intend to obstruct to the utmost of their power the Home Rule Bill—that they feel it their duty to do so, and that they are doing so at the present moment.

MR. J. CHAMBERLAIN: I cannot allow the hon. Gentleman to misrepresent me. I did not say anything of the kind. I said we should do our utmost to pre-

vent the Second Reading being taken before Easter.

MR. LABOUCHERE: And the right hon. Gentleman has been "doing his utmost." We only differ about the word obstruction. What I call obstruction the right hon. Gentleman calls "doing his utmost." I would point out to the Chancellor of the Exchequer that he has treated the Leader of the Opposition far too seriously. The Leader of the Opposition used all the stock phrases that have been used again and again upon questions of this kind. I could not put them so eloquently as the right hon. Gentleman, but there was not a single word that the right hon. Gentleman said that I have not said a dozen times in past years. The right hon. Gentleman said it was true that you might take Saturdays at a later period, but it was perfectly monstrous to take them at this early period of the Session. And when summer comes the right hon. Gentleman will say—"You might have taken them at a time when we could not go to the country; if you had taken them at an early period of the Session we would not have complained." I have done it myself; I have done it before Easter. Yes; and I have done it after Easter. Then the right hon. Gentleman said the action of the Government was indecent. I have told the right hon. Gentleman himself that the action of his Government was indecent. The right hon. Gentleman said he was not going to be trampled upon. I have said that often; I have said I was not going to be trampled upon. I have said that a crushed worm would turn. But I got no benefit from any of these phrases. I was simply trampled upon. The thing is as clear as possible. It is admitted that there will be fair and reasonable time for the Estimates, and hon. Gentlemen are making this opposition simply and solely because they do not wish the Home Rule Bill to come on before Easter. We on our side think this is precisely the best time for the Home Rule Bill. We desire that no further time should be wasted, and that the Home Rule Bill should not perpetually stand in the way of every other business. Therefore we hope and we are determined that the Home Rule Bill will not only come on, but will be carried, before Easter. As for Saturday, there is nothing sacred about Saturday. Why are you not to sit on Saturday? We have heard of the classical story of

the Roman sentinel dying in his place. All we wish hon. Members to do is to sit in their places. What right hon. Gentlemen ought to remember is that the business of Members of Parliament is to do the business of Parliament. We have got certain business to do. We have to carry through the Supplementary Estimates and to carry Home Rule—and, what is more, we mean to do it. If it is necessary, we will agree to sit every night until 4 in the morning; and if by that means we cannot pass the Bill before Easter we will do without any holidays at Easter at all. The right hon. Gentleman, when he talks of the rights and privileges of minorities, must remember that he is no longer what he was for six years—the head of a majority. He is in a minority; we are in a majority, and we mean to have our own way.

\*MR. JAMES LOWTHER (Kent, Thanet) rose amidst cries of "Divide!" I take the earliest opportunity, Mr. Speaker, of drawing your attention to the fact that there is an organized attempt being made to stifle Debate in this House. [*Renewed cries of "Divide!"*] I think we are entitled, notwithstanding these disorderly interruptions, to which I certainly do not intend to submit—[*Renewed cries of "Divide!"*] If an attempt is made to repeat these disorderly interruptions I shall move that this House do now adjourn. I think we are entitled upon this occasion, when the Government are asking for special facilities and additional time, to consider how the facilities and the time they have already had at their disposal have been spent by them. The hon. Member for Northampton boldly argues in favour not only of a Saturday Sitting, but of a Sunday Sitting—for he says he is in favour of Sitting all night, to 5 o'clock in the morning. That is a proposal which he makes upon his own responsibility, and which the House is quite capable of discussing and considering. With regard to the immediate proposal before the House, I would ask the House to consider what claim the Government had to make this demand. The Chancellor of the Exchequer began by giving an account of an arduous night devoted to Supply on February 20 of this year. The discussion on that night, which the Chancellor of the Exchequer takes credit to himself for having afforded the House,

to discuss the Estimates in Supply; in point of fact occupied about three-quarters of a minute for it, and consisted simply of a Motion by the Prime Minister that Mr. Mellor do *pro formâ* take the Chair. That, Sir, is a sample of Ministerial accuracy. I am bound to say that upon that occasion the business of the Government was gone through with expedition and with the unanimous concurrence of the House, and so I have nothing more to say about the 20th of February. But how did we spend the other days? The first day that Supply was legitimately before the House was on a Thursday. The business of the House did not admit of the Order being reached that day until about half-past 7 o'clock. In a very few minutes after that time the customary suspension of business for the dinner half-hour took place, and within a few minutes after its termination an hon. Gentleman who was in Committee of Supply for the first time, and who had never before seen the House engaged in the duty of voting the Estimates, moved that the Question be now put. Needless to say that the Chairman took no notice of that interruption. The discussion had scarcely proceeded many minutes more before the same hon. Gentleman, who was engaged for the first time in his life in assisting in Committee of Supply, again moved that the Question be now put. Very shortly afterwards another hon. Member, who was likewise engaged for the first time in his life in assisting in Committee of Supply, got up and articulated a point of Order. Was there anything like it heard before in the world? In the nursery it would be called precocity. At school a harsher term would be applied to it. Here we have the time of the House occupied by supporters of the Government in raising frivolous and absolutely absurd points of so-called Order—order being a commodity of which they had no knowledge whatever. But that is not the worst of what occurred. In the course of the next Sitting in Supply a very important Vote arose involving a question of policy which required an explanation from the Head of the Irish Department. I do not see the Chief Secretary at this moment in his place. He was there a few minutes ago, and I dare say before we have much further

proceeded he will likewise be in his place again. An answer was indispensable, but the representative of the Government in the House at the time—a most courteous representative of the Government, my right hon. Friend the Secretary to the Treasury (Sir J. Hibbert), could not, naturally—for it was not within his power or capacity—state what was the future Irish policy of the Government. It became necessary to make a Motion that the Chairman do report Progress in order to get the Chief Secretary in his place. When the right hon. Gentleman arrived I put a question to him, as I had a perfect right to do, regarding a very important portion of the policy of his Department, and the right hon. Gentleman very curtly declined to reply. Well, that was the right hon. Gentleman's own affair and not mine, and I do not urge it as a personal grievance. But what followed when the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham (Mr. J. Chamberlain) rose to complain of his want of courtesy? The right hon. Gentleman put up his own private secretary to move the closure. Of course, I assume that the right hon. Gentleman was responsible for the action of his private secretary. The Chancellor of the Exchequer seems to deny that, but am I to understand that the Chief Secretary for Ireland has no more control over his own private secretary than he has over his own temper? [*Cries of "Order!" and "Withdraw!"*]

\*MR. SPEAKER: The right hon. Gentleman is not entitled to speak in that way.

MR. JAMES LOWTHER: Of course, Sir, I withdraw the remark to which you object. But am I to understand that the Chief Secretary has no influence over his own private secretary?

SIR W. HARCOURT: It did not occur.

MR. JAMES LOWTHER: The right hon. Gentleman and I are at issue on a question of fact. If he refers to *The Times* newspaper of the following day he will find that the private secretary to the Chief Secretary of the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland—[At this point the Chief Secretary for Ireland returned to the House.] I see the right hon. Gentleman now in his place, and I will repeat what I have said. I was saying

that when the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham rose to speak, my hon. Friend the Member for Tyneside Division (Mr. Joseph A. Pease), the very efficient and able private secretary of the right hon. Gentleman, moved that the Question be now put.

MR. J. MORLEY: I know nothing about the affair.

MR. JAMES LOWTHER: But are we to understand that the right hon. Gentleman has so little influence on the hon. Member who sits behind him, and who occupies so confidential a position as his private secretary—

SIR W. HARCOURT: Question.

MR. JAMES LOWTHER: I tell the Chancellor of the Exchequer that this is the Question.

Mr. Hugh Hoare rose in his place, and claimed to move, "That the Question be now put;" but Mr. Speaker withheld his assent, and declined then to put that Question.

Debate resumed.

MR. JAMES LOWTHER: This is an apt illustration of what I have been pointing out to the House, that our proceedings are being continually interrupted by supporters of the Government, one of whom, as I have mentioned, acts in very confidential relations with the Chief Secretary—a personal friend of mine, and a most efficient private secretary—our proceedings, as I have said, are interrupted by those hon. Members making Motions which are not calculated to advance the business of the House. I may also remark that that very same hon. Gentleman tried immediately afterwards, to the great amusement of the Committee, actually to clôtüre the Chancellor of the Exchequer. I say, Sir, that attempts to curtail the freedom of debate are not calculated to advance the progress of Public Business in this House. Those of us who object to the time of the House being spent in such a manner have a right to point out that meeting arguments advanced in a regular manner against the most irregular action of the Government by interruptions, articulate or inarticulate, are not creditable to the House of Commons. Now what is the case with regard to the Saturday Sitting? The hon. Member for Northampton has said, with perfect truth,

*Mr. James Lowther*

that whether the Saturday Sitting be asked for in March or in any other month, the principle is the same. With certain reservations I entirely agree with the hon. Member for Northampton. Whether the proposal is made in March, April, May, or June, it is equally open to objection. But what I contend is that the House has never in the past been asked to sit on a Saturday except for the purpose of dealing with some great public emergency, when time was an essential element. I do not deny that I have known of a Saturday Sitting even as early as this. I recollect that the first subject of great importance I ever heard debated in this House was on a Saturday, and on the 17th of February. It was a proposal made by the right hon. Gentleman himself (Mr. Gladstone) in 1866, which proposal received the almost unanimous assent of the House—to suspend the Habeas Corpus Act in Ireland. Nobody took exception to the extraordinary proceeding of a Saturday Sitting on a matter of that great emergency. ["Hear, hear!"] The Chancellor of the Exchequer says "hear, hear!" Nobody has alleged that if the interest of the State required it, or if it is required by the Government in order to comply with the law, that there should not be a Saturday Sitting. But we contend that there is ample time otherwise to dispose of the actual legitimate business of Supply, and that there is full opportunity of considering Government measures that can fairly be proposed to the House of Commons. I think we have a right to point out that whatever pressure may exist with regard to public business has been solely and entirely caused by the manner in which Business has hitherto been conducted by the Government and by disorderly interruptions of their own followers.

MR. HANBURY (Preston) said, it was generally to be observed that when a Government made use of its majority—which in this case appeared to be tyrannical in reverse proportion to its smallness—to override the rights of the House—and surely one of the first of the rights of the House was to discuss its ordinary Business on ordinary days and during ordinary hours—it was usual for the Government to point at the occupants of the Opposition Benches, and

say, "You did exactly the same thing when you were in Office." It was a little suspicious that the Government were unable to do that to-day; and it was especially suspicious that the Chancellor of the Exchequer, who was fond of using *tu quoque* arguments of the kind, was unable to say anything of that nature. It was impossible for the Government to quote any precedent for the Motion before the House, for two reasons: first, because there never had been a Government which held Saturday Sittings so early in the Session, and there never had been a Government, in recent years at least, which, having taken Saturday Sittings, did not apply to these Sittings the Rules which governed Wednesday Sittings. The hon. Member for Southampton had asked what was there in Saturday to make it any different to the House of Commons from any other day in the week. But there were reasons which made Saturday to the House of Commons very different to other days in the week. Saturday came when the House was fagged after a hard week's work, and it was a holiday to which the House always looked. The fact that a distinct Motion had to be passed to obtain a Saturday Sitting showed that it was an unusual course for the House to sit on Saturday. Saturday was also the longest day on which the House could sit. The House might meet at 12 noon, and sit beyond midnight, for the Twelve o'clock Rule did not apply, so that the Prime Minister would obtain, if his Motion were carried, not only a Saturday Sitting but Sunday Sitting as well. He asked the right hon. Gentleman to at least follow the usual precedent and limit the Sitting to 6 o'clock, as on Wednesdays. He found that since 1886, whenever the House sat on Saturday it had always sat under the Wednesday Rules. Such a proposal as that before the House had never been made by the late Government. The House sat on Saturday, 6th August, 1887, from 12 to 5.45 o'clock; on Saturday, 13th August, 1887, from 12 to 6 o'clock; on Saturday, 20th August, 1887, from 12 to 6 o'clock. All these Sittings were late in the Session, when business was pressing and had to be got through. On Saturday, the 11th August, 1888, the House sat from 12 to 5.30 o'clock, and debate a Motion for the adjournment of the House during the whole of that time.



There were several other instances of the House sitting on Saturdays from 12 to 6 o'clock. Saturday, the 9th August, 1890, was the only occasion on which the House did not sit under the Wednesday Rules, but that was by the general consent of the House, and simply and solely in order that the Prorogation might take place as soon as possible. There was, therefore, absolutely no precedent for this most arbitrary proposal of the Government. And really, after all, what would the Leader of the House gain by his Motion? He had mentioned a case in which the House sat on a Saturday from 12 to 6, when the followers of the right hon. Gentleman, then in Opposition, used the whole time in a discussion on the adjournment of the House. They were not likely to follow that bad example, though the temptation to do so was much greater, for here the Motion was not to sit from 12 to 6, but from 12 to Sunday morning. The late Government had always treated the Opposition fairly, because all their Saturday Sitzings were under the Wednesday Rules, but the present Government was not treating the Opposition fairly in that respect, and therefore the temptation to take up the time of the House with discussions was all the greater. What was the sole and only justification for this Motion? Could there be even a suggestion that it was due to any purposeless, needless, or unfair discussion of the Estimates. So far from the Opposition being properly charged with obstruction, all the obstruction was really done by the other side. The object of this Saturday Sitting was to get through the Estimates in order to bring forward the Home Rule Bill; and that really meant that under the plea of time being wanted to debate the Home Rule Bill they were not to be allowed proper time to discuss the Estimates. The House should remember that there never had been such Supplementary Estimates before it for many years. They had Army Estimates, which were totally in opposition to the Army Estimates of previous years. During recent years their discussions on the Navy Estimates had been governed by the Naval Defence Act. Now they had to discuss a new policy—they had to discuss the abandonment of the old policy, which had had years before it, and to discuss a new makeshift policy, to last only one

*Mr. Hanbury*

year. In the Supplementary Estimates they had not only to discuss the subject of Uganda, but to discuss the Vote for the Evicted Tenants Commission, which the right hon. Gentleman thought of such importance that he had set a whole day apart for it. Then they had the charges for the Law Officers of the Crown, which involved new principles, and a breach of faith on the part of the Government. If there had been anything clearly understood it was that the Law Officers should have no private practice; and in addition to that breach of faith, a new Department had been set up, and it was proposed to make the salaries of that Department go back over the seven months during which the Government had been in power. If the right hon. Gentleman, under the plea of debating the Home Rule Bill, prevented them from discussing the Estimates, he would do so in defiance of the law, for the law required the right hon. Gentleman to get the Supplementary Estimates and Votes on Account by a certain time. Did the right hon. Gentleman suppose he would get the Supplementary Estimates and the Votes on Account by Thursday? But if he did not get them, and if he brought forward the Home Rule Bill on that day, and went on with it day after day, how was he going to comply with the law in regard to the financial arrangements? They objected to the discussions on the Estimates being curtailed for the Home Rule Bill; they desired to have that Bill freely and completely discussed by their constituents at Easter, after it had been kept secret from them for seven years. Therefore, the right hon. Gentleman, in bringing forward this Motion, was the real obstructor, and was also going against all precedents of the House, and, in order to bind the right hon. Gentleman to follow the precedents set in regard to Saturday Sitzings, he begged to move his Resolution.

Mr. Owen rose in his place, and claimed to move, "That the Question be now put;" but Mr. Speaker withheld his assent, and declined then to put that Question.

Debate resumed:

\*MR. SPEAKER called on Major Rasch.

MAJOR RASCH (Essex, S.E.) said, he begged to second the Amendment of his hon. Friend. He failed—

MR. OWEN : I beg to move that the Question be now put.

\*MR. SPEAKER : The hon. Gentleman is a new Member, but he must be aware that this Question was moved only a quarter of an hour ago.

MAJOR RASCH said he failed to see why the Government should accept the proposal of the hon. Member for Preston. The Government could not complain of the length of the Debates. Last night they had had on the Army Vote a most important question briefly discussed. The same thing had occurred on the Navy Votes. He represented a maritime constituency, and the men who had sent him to the House of Commons wished, through him, to lay certain grievances before the Admiralty. But so anxious was he to facilitate business that he did not intervene in the discussion. What was his reward? They were kept there until 2 o'clock, and even when they got a Saturday Sitting they were deprived of any advantage from it. He begged to second the Amendment.

Amendment proposed,

After the word "To-morrow," to insert the words "subject to the Standing Orders which regulate the Sittings of the House on Wednesday."—(*Mr. Hanbury.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

\*MR. T. W. RUSSELL (Tyrone, S.) did not rise so much for the purpose of debating this question of a Saturday Sitting as to ask the Prime Minister what he really expected to gain by a proceeding of this kind. The right hon. Gentleman was the oldest Member of the House, and he must know that any attempt to ride rough-shod over a minority, and especially a minority of the character of the present minority, ended in disaster to those who attempted it. He (Mr. Russell) had been in the House for six or seven years, and he never yet saw any good whatever arise out of these all-night Sittings, or these extraordinary Sittings for special purposes. They had been told by the Member for Northampton (Mr. Labouchere) that there had been obstruction on the Estimates. Now, the simple matter of fact regarding the Estimates amounted to this : that up to the present there had been four Sittings

—and not full Sittings—devoted to these Estimates, the time occupied being only 18½ hours upon the Supplementary and Army and Navy Estimates, and because of the expenditure of such a limited time as that the right hon. Gentleman, after having suspended the Twelve o'clock Rule on five different occasions, after having already had one Saturday Sitting, proposed now to take another, and they had hon. Members coming to the House and absolutely requesting the Minister to put a gag on the House and close the Home Rule Debate after three days' discussion.

MR. SPEAKER : It is my duty to point out that by the Amendment before the House, the question is limited to whether, if the House sits to-morrow, it shall be for an unlimited time, or whether it shall be under the provisions regulating a Wednesday's Sitting.

MR. T. W. RUSSELL said, that if the Sitting were to be so limited his argument as to the utility of the Sitting became stronger than ever, because if hon. Members belonging to the Opposition were animated by the spirit which their opponents declared they were—and which he did not believe—then nothing was simpler and easier than to make the Sitting a nullity. The hon. Member for Camborne (Mr. Conybeare) said that the closure was available, but he did not think that any Member contending for legitimate discussion of the Estimates could fairly be closed by the House. All he could say as regarded the Supplemental Estimates was that, whether they were discussed at the Saturday Sitting or not, he intended, so far as he was concerned, on the Irish Estimates to exercise his right to the fullest extent to legitimately discuss them.

MR. COURTNEY (Cornwall, Bodmin) : I should like to say one word on the special Amendment before the House. I presume the Prime Minister will not accept the Amendment, because it is clear if the Amendment were accepted, if the Opposition were animated by the feelings which the Chancellor of the Exchequer attributed to them, the object in view might be defeated by its operation. If you have a fixed term at which a discussion must come to a conclusion it would be quite easy by many processes to prevent any Vote from being taken. I remember a Saturday Sitting of which

the whole time was occupied by a Motion for Adjournment made by the hon. Member for Northampton, so that it did not come to the real question for which the Sitting was appointed. The Prime Minister, however, might I think say a few words which might have an effect, not merely on the present Amendment, but on the attitude of the House towards the proposition itself, with reference to sitting late to-morrow. I do not wish him to lay down any fixed rule or limit as to the Sitting, but if the right hon. Gentleman were to give some intimation as to the amount of work which he expects from the House to-morrow—if he would indicate the number and character of the Votes which he desired the House to agree to—we might then come to some understanding which would not expose us to the chance of an unlimited Sitting, and might at the same time act as a sort of stimulus to hon. Members to condense the Debate as much as possible. With a view, then, to expediting business and coming to some practical agreement, I would ask the right hon. Gentleman to state the amount of work he expects from the Committee to-morrow, and such an intimation might obviate the necessity of dividing on the present Amendment.

Mr. WYNDHAM (Dover) said, he thought they had a right to complain that subjects in which English Members took a lively interest should be discussed at the late hours of the very last day of the week. It was bad enough that they should be asked to sit on Saturday at all, but surely it was only reasonable that if they did undertake that additional burden the Government should not prolong the Sitting to the very extreme limit. It was not very long since in that House they listened to a most eloquent profession of respect and almost of reverence for the political equality of all the Members of that House. That profession came from the Prime Minister, but was he carrying that profession into effect? The right hon. Gentleman said they were all to be politically equal without distinction of rank or talent or any other distinction, but he must have made a mental reservation. He must have ignored the distinction of race, for it appeared that every English Member of that House was not to be allowed the liberties or facilities which were accorded

to those who sat for constituencies in Scotland, Ireland, and Wales. The only reason for this demand was that measures affecting Ireland and Wales had been given a place to which they were not entitled on any just estimate of their claim. No appeal had been made in this matter to their reason or courtesy; they had been treated with indifference and contempt. [*Ministerial cries of "Order!"*] That was so. The English Members had not been treated with courtesy during that Debate. They had been threatened with the closure, and Ministers declined to reply to just and fair arguments. If he made this protest he did so knowing that he, at any rate, had not trespassed upon the indulgence of the House during the Session, but he had felt that he, as a Member sitting for an English constituency, had a right to protest against the neglect of all English interests by the Government, and to protest especially against English interests being discussed at the fag-end of the week, and every advantage being accorded the interests of Scotland, Ireland, and Wales.

Mr. W. E. GLADSTONE: I do not rise, Sir, to join in the general Debate within the limits you have properly laid down for the discussion of the Amendment. One remark I wish to make in answer to the hon. Gentleman who has just sat down, because I should feel very deeply hurt indeed if I felt within myself there was any foundation for his charge that we—I mean the Government—who are under special responsibilities, have not treated English Members—that is to say, three-fourths of the whole of the House—with courtesy. The prime and capital article of the creed of courtesy is to exercise patience and self-restraint, and to abstain from offensive imputations. Speaking for myself, I have felt a necessity for exercising some of that self-restraint. I may appeal to every hon. Gentleman who hears me, and I believe I may say the same of my colleagues, that we have not used a single word of imputation with regard to motives. That is the principle on which I have acted, and on which I shall continue to act. Now, the right hon. Gentleman the Member for the Bodmin Division wishes to know what is our special object in the demand we now make on the House. I may say that I did declare in an early part of the evening that there would be

no attempt or effort to encroach on the day of rest. But independently of that, my right hon. Friend wishes to know what is our special object in the demand we have made to-morrow on the grounds of the interest of the Public Service and the best arrangements of Public Business. Our main object, I might almost say our sole object, is to dispose of the Army and Navy Votes. Then I think there are some non-contentious Votes on the Supplemental Estimates which we shall be glad to take, but we do not propose to make any serious demands on the time of the House with regard to them.

MR. COURTNEY: Then I understand my right hon. Friend proposes to take the first Vote of the Army and Navy Estimates and any non-contentious Vote?

MR. W. E. GLADSTONE: Yes.

MR. HANBURY: Does the right hon. Gentleman include the Army Supplemental Estimates?

MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: Yes.

MR. GOSCHEN (St. George's, Hanover Square): I am sure the right hon. Gentleman wishes to show all personal courtesy to the House and every hon. Member of the House, but from the Parliamentary point of view I do not think that the House has been treated with courtesy during this Debate. No Minister has submitted grounds for a Saturday Sitting at all. The right hon. Gentleman was necessarily absent during the speech of the Chancellor of the Exchequer; but the Chancellor of the Exchequer did not even lay the foundation for a Saturday Sitting, much less for a Saturday Sitting prolonged beyond 6 o'clock. We have nothing before us except that these extraordinary measures are necessary on the dictatorial *ipse dixit* of the Government, and on nothing else. We have not been informed why these extraordinary measures are necessary. The Chancellor of the Exchequer dwelt for a moment upon some newspaper report he had seen, but I challenge the right hon. Gentleman or his colleagues to show in all the history of Parliament that a Saturday Sitting has ever been asked for without a statement of the motives for such a Sitting. While I acquit the right hon. Gentleman of discourtesy, I say that the Parliamentary minority have not been treated accord-

ing to the traditions of the House. Seeing that this is an invasion of all Parliamentary practice, and that not an attempt has been made to prove that it is in accordance with Parliamentary practice, we have a right to ask—Is this to be a precedent for the future that Saturday Sittings are to be prolonged until midnight because Her Majesty's Government desire to see a Bill, not urgent, passed by a particular day? Why in some future Session should not a Bill equally dear to the right hon. Gentleman be put in the same position? Is not this, therefore, a breach of Parliamentary practice and Parliamentary privilege? Surely it would have been decorous for Her Majesty's Government to lay some foundation for this course. We are obliged to contend—for there can be no other view of the matter—that Her Majesty's Government are so determined not to allow the Easter Recess to intervene before the Second Reading of the Bill that they are ready to put you, Sir, to the inconvenience, and the whole House to the inconvenience, of a Saturday Sitting lest the country during the Easter Recess should have an opportunity, which it has not had as yet, of pronouncing an opinion on the Home Rule Bill before the House is asked to give it a Second Reading. We are asked to have a Saturday Sitting in order to take this Bill on Thursday next, even though the Schedules are not printed, and although important questions on the measure have failed to elicit any information from the right hon. Gentleman.

MR. SPEAKER: I am bound to say I think this is rather travelling from the scope of the Amendment.

MR. GOSCHEN: The connection between the two I was showing is this:—That we are to sit not only to 6 o'clock, but to any hour of the night—till 12 o'clock—in order to compass the object which I have attempted to describe; but, of course, after your ruling, Sir, I will say no more on that point, but will address myself to the particular point which the right hon. Gentleman rose to inform us of. He did not give us any reason why we are to sit till 12 o'clock; he abstained entirely from any arguments, but he told us that on Saturday we are to conclude—sitting to any hour—the Army, Navy, and Supplementary Estimates. Does the right hon. Gentle-

man know how long we have discussed the Navy Estimates formerly, and does he think, the Speaker not yet being out of the Chair, that both they and the Army Estimates could fairly be taken on a Saturday? Is the course he proposes just to this House or conducive to the service of the country? Is it just that these Estimates should be taken on a Saturday at hours which the right hon. Gentleman knows are inconvenient to everybody in the House? It is as utterly unreasonable as it is unprecedented, but the tone of the right hon. Gentleman's supporters is well shown by the idea that it is totally unnecessary for Army or Navy men to speak on the Army or Navy Estimates at all. I venture to submit that if the right hon. Gentleman by means of his majority gets us to sit on Saturday, it is quite unreasonable to expect that the discussion on these Votes shall be concluded before we are released from our labours for the night. I hope, therefore, the right hon. Gentleman will reconsider the decision at which he has arrived, for I am sure it will not further the business of the House if he insists on this course.

MR. W. E. GLADSTONE: Sir, I feel in great difficulty because I am unwilling to strain any point, but to follow the ruling which you, Sir, have just laid down. I have, no doubt, misunderstood it, but I understood the right hon. Gentleman to discuss on this Amendment the whole question of the sitting on a Saturday, and to call for a justification for such a course. He says that "the Government have not shown any necessity for a Saturday Sitting except their own dictatorial *ipse dixit*." Is it not an elementary duty of this Government, and of every Government, to form the best estimate they can as to the arrangement of Public Business, and likewise as to the time which the respective subjects of discussion may be reasonably expected to occupy? And when they have done that, and stated what they propose to do, the right hon. Gentleman, who has sat many years in the Government, himself calls it a dictatorial *ipse dixit*. It is the simplest and most elementary duty of a Government, and any Government which omitted it would be liable to the just censure of the House. And then, Sir, the right hon. Gentleman says that all this matter

has grown up because of the desire to pass a Bill which is not urgent. Well, Sir, as to this Bill, which he says is not urgent, his mention of it suggests to me that his own warm antagonism to the Bill a little perverts the integrity of his judgment with respect to the magnitude and necessity of the measure. I have heard it described by the right hon. Gentleman himself as a Bill which alone is sufficient to occupy—

MR. BARTLEY (*interposing*): Mr. Speaker, on a point of Order, may I ask if the right hon. Gentleman is speaking to the Amendment, which you have ruled to be limited?

MR. SPEAKER: I think the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Goschen) who last spoke rather transgressed the limit which I laid down, and it is to those remarks the right hon. Gentleman is now replying.

MR. BARTLEY: Shall we be at liberty to discuss it?

\*MR. SPEAKER: As a matter of fact, the discussion is limited to the particular question whether, if the House sits to-morrow, it shall act under the conditions which regulate a Wednesday's Sitting. If this Amendment is disposed of it will then be proper to discuss the Main Question.

MR. W. E. GLADSTONE: It is due to the right hon. Gentleman that, in some shape or another, I should reply to the question put to me. If it is in conformity with the feelings and wishes of the House that the House should give its judgment at once upon the Amendment, it would, perhaps, be far better than for me to pursue an irregular discussion.

Question put.

The House divided:—Ayes 231; Noes 252.—(Division List, No. 27.)

Main Question again proposed.

MR. W. E. GLADSTONE and Mr. HENEAGE rising together, the SPEAKER called on the former right hon. Gentleman.

MR. W. E. GLADSTONE: I am very sorry to appear discourteous, even for a moment, to my right hon. Friend (Mr. Heneage), but in fact I was in the middle of a suspended speech when that speech was postponed in order that the Amendment might be disposed of. I

have already said that I felt it was the duty of the Government to form the best forecast that it could of the course of Business, and of how to divide the time, and especially that portion of the Session between the meeting of Parliament and Easter. That duty we have endeavoured to perform, and I will describe to you how it has been presented to us. It appeared to us that, although Easter was early, the meeting of Parliament was also somewhat earlier than it had been of late years. Three things were indispensable for us to aim at, and, if possible, for us to effect, between the meeting of Parliament and Easter, if it were found that Parliament were satisfied with the usual and ordinary employment of its powers. One of these, of course, was to dispose of the Supplementary Estimates and the other preliminary Votes which are necessary to start us on the financial year. Another was the introduction of Bills, and especially of Bills that might be considered non-contentious in the ordinary sense, and which referred to Great Britain, because we felt after the long discussions and the active state of public opinion during the six years of the last Parliament, that however vital to Imperial interests the Irish Government Bill might be considered by the majority of the House, yet that Great Britain would not consent to dispense with honest and energetic effort on our part to pass beneficent legislation for this important part of the Empire. That was the second division of the two divisions of time that came before us between the assembling of the House and Easter. And the third portion was that which, if not required for the Supplementary Estimates and for the introduction of Bills, appeared to us to have the highest claims upon it, as was expressly admitted by some speakers on the other side—namely, the claims for the Bill for the purpose of establishing a local Parliament in Ireland. Well, Sir, that measure is a measure which has been the main one in the view of the country for six years, and in our view and our opinion was the burning question of the principal part, if not the whole, of the elections that have taken place. [An hon. MEMBER: Grimsby.] The hon Member need not interpose in that way. I am not endeavouring to describe the state of his mind, but to give the motives that

actuated us. It appeared to us to be an absolute and indispensable portion of our duty to introduce this Bill. But I think it will be felt by the whole House that if we were to grapple with a subject of that magnitude and difficulty it was our duty to grapple with it in earnest, and not to lose a single moment in getting into such a position in relation to the other Business of the Session that we might confidently reckon, humanly speaking, upon passing it through the House, not in the dregs of the Session, but at a time when the full attention of the House and of the country could be given to it. We therefore gave notice of the introduction of the Bill for February 6. The prolongation of the Debate on the Address prevented the fulfilment of that intention. On February 13th the Bill was introduced, and it was our full conviction that it was possible to dispose of the Second Reading of the Bill before Easter. So far from being a mere *ipse dixit* of our own, it is our absolute duty to submit that plan to the judgment of the House, and by that judgment we shall be guided. My right hon. Friend the late Chancellor of the Exchequer said we were in dread lest light should be let in upon this Bill, as if we were at Easter to have something like a great illumination, a light that the Bill could not get at any other portion of the year. But the light we have had cast upon the Bill is a larger light than ever was cast upon any Bill introduced by the late Government. Our duty was to allow an ample time between the introduction of the Bill and the Second Reading. The introduction of the Bill was moved on February 13, and the Second Reading stands for March 16. I believe that that is a longer period than has ever, so far as my recollection goes, been allowed upon a great measure which it was intended seriously to discuss, and if possible to carry. There were these three branches of business which it was the duty of the Government to grapple with. Am I right or am I wrong in saying if we were to encounter the difficulties in so important and complex a measure as the Irish Government Bill, it was our absolute and plain duty to give it the earliest position in the business of the Session, so that we might be enabled to pass it through its stages at a time when opportunity of discussion

could be enjoyed by the House, and without it being carried to a period of the year when attention is deeply exhausted, and a full attendance of Members could not reasonably be expected. These are the grounds for the computation which we made; these are the grounds for what has been called our dictatorial *ipse dixit*. We felt that after Easter the Budget must come on, and that the miscellaneous and general Estimates must be proceeded with, and that the rational and practical method of dealing with the time, and the extraordinary exigencies of the present Session, depended upon our acting upon the plan that I have described, and upon that also which I believe I may claim on our behalf—namely, that we should not ourselves waste the time of the House by producing frivolous discussions, but produce our measure in the most effective and most economical manner, and so as to produce the largest possible net results for the benefit of the country.

Mr. GOSCHEN: I am in precisely the same position as the right hon. Gentleman in this respect—that I was in the middle of a suspended speech when you, Mr. Speaker, thought I was transgressing. I said the right hon. Gentleman was proceeding on his own *ipse dixit* because he had not made the speech which he has now made. The right hon. Gentleman has given the House his reasons for proceeding as he proposes. He speaks of the emergency of the present position, but he has not even yet shown that there is any emergency. Therefore we are driven to this position—that not having been shown any emergency there is some special reason for taking this Bill before the other Government measures and before the Estimates. The right hon. Gentleman does not understand that this question can be further illuminated by anything that may happen in the Easter holidays; but the Easter holidays which intervened between the First and Second Reading of the Bill of 1886 threw a great deal of light upon the Bill; indeed, it threw so much light upon the measure that it was defeated on the Second Reading. Therefore I think the right hon. Gentleman has no reason to depreciate the efficacy of Easter light. Why must this Bill be taken before Easter rather than any other Bill? The right hon. Gentleman said more light had been thrown upon this Bill than upon

any Bill of the late Government; but his own friends do not understand the Bill as yet. There are not 10 Members in this House who understand the financial proposals of the Bill, and it is in vain that we ask the right hon. Gentleman or his Colleagues for further light upon these proposals. If the right hon. Gentleman is asked questions he replies with such merciless rhetoric as to suggest that he thought he was on an Edinburgh platform being heckled by his constituents rather than being asked perfectly proper questions by hon. Members in this House. Let me repeat to the right hon. Gentleman that we complain that we have not even got the Schedules of the Bill, that we are asked to pass the Second Reading. Can the right hon. Gentleman recall a case where such important matters connected with a Bill have been kept in the dark until the very morning of the Second Reading? There is the question of the Customs and Excise. Why is it thought necessary to proceed with a Bill when the Government are not in a position to fill up the Schedule, and when they have not yet formed a plan on the financial part of the scheme? The right hon. Gentleman has now put before us the reason why he takes this Bill; but he has not shown any reason whatever why this particular Bill should be placed before others. I can see why he takes Saturday. It is because Labour Members are beginning to complain that Ireland once more blocks the way. There were two questions from Labour Members on the Paper to-day. These hon. Gentlemen wanted to proceed with social and labour questions rather than with this question of Home Rule. Why do they not put pressure on the Government to postpone, as we wish to postpone, till after Easter this particular Bill? Then we can all be satisfied, and no time will be lost. That does not suit hon. Gentlemen from Ireland; but it would suit hon. Members from other quarters, if they are sincere. The fact is, right hon. Gentlemen opposite are playing into the hands of the Irish Members, and in order to make peace with the Labour Members they are invading the privileges of Parliament by organising Saturday sittings in a manner unheard of before. We cannot be surprised that a Government which is prepared to pull the Constitution to pieces in the future are not so sensitive

as we are with regard to the proceedings of Parliament at the present time. The right hon. Gentleman has offered no reply whatever to the point which I put with regard to whether this is to be a precedent. Are Saturday Sittings to be taken for Government business early in the Session?

**MR. W. E. GLADSTONE:** The remarkable circumstances must be taken into account.

**MR. GOSCHEN:** The remarkable circumstance is that, of a group of legislative measures, one measure must be put before the others without any reason. Why, Sir, if lives and property of people were at stake, then certainly it would be necessary to proceed at once. But the difference is between a Bill which will imperil life and property and a Bill which is to protect life and property. If the right hon. Gentleman brought in a measure which he thought absolutely necessary to pacify Clare we should be ready to give him time for it, and he would have our support as well as that of his own supporters. One other point I would put to the Government. It is a very simple point: whether in the history of Parliament a Motion such as this has been pressed in the face of a majority of 21 only. Surely the Government will see that in the face of such a majority it is preposterous to proceed on the lines which they seem to have laid down for themselves, and that, while they will not achieve the object they desire, they will cause the House infinite embarrassment.

**MR. HENEAGE (Great Grimsby):** I do not desire to go into the question of the Home Rule Bill, but I think the constituencies of the country require a great deal of illuminating in regard to that Bill. I do not think there is anyone in this House who has a right to speak with more certainty on that question than I have. For a whole week I was engaged addressing six or seven meetings a day at Grimsby. A great number of Irish Members and others had been down trying to illuminate that constituency, but they were still entirely in the dark. At that time people were laying 4 to 1 on my opponent. In the course of three or four days we changed that opinion, and when I went

to church on Sunday I was informed that they were laying 2 to 1 on me. They were good judges. My objection to this proposal is, that I entirely object to any new precedent without good and grave reason for it. Some four or five years ago we took a great deal of trouble with the Rules of the House, and endeavoured to prevent hon. Members being worn out by unearthly hours. What was the good of Standing Orders if they are to be suspended in this way? Private Members have been deprived of their days, the Twelve o'clock Rule has been suspended, and now we are to have Saturday Sittings. I think, instead of wasting the whole of this Sitting, which they have taken from private Members, the Government should have done what work they could to-day. The Motion is absolutely and entirely unnecessary. If the Government have not time for both Supply and the Home Rule Bill before Easter, whose fault is it? I will tell them what the constituency of Grimsby thinks. They think the Government have muddled away their time in bringing in a lot of still-born Bills for which the people do not seem to have any great affection. The Government have no right to ask the House to sit on Saturday when they have muddled away the time they had. Why are we to have the question of the Evicted Tenants Commission forced upon us on Monday? In order that the country may not know the contents of the Report, and that hon. Members must discuss it without having it in their hands. The wise course would be for the Prime Minister to withdraw this Motion now, and to take the Estimates on Monday and Tuesday next, postponing the discussion of the Evicted Tenants Commission Report until we have had fair time for digesting it. If that were done, they would get all their Estimates, and would conclude the discussion on this Report within the next week or 10 days. But if we are to have the Home Rule Bill put first we shall have no discussion on the Estimates, and we shall have to be closed on Home Rule. I hope the House will reject the Motion—as they very nearly rejected the Motion just now. If the Government proceed with Motions of this kind they will find that their majorities will become smaller even than they are now.



COLONEL SAUNDERSON (Armagh, N.): As no hon. Member of the Party to which I belong has addressed the House, perhaps I may be allowed to say one or two words. The Prime Minister appears to think that we are asking an unreasonable thing when we demand that there should be delay before the Second Reading of the Home Rule Bill is taken. Now, I should like to read a very short quotation which will have great effect with the right hon. Gentleman. This is what his own Attorney General said on the 12th of January last at Cambridge, before the Bill was introduced. He said—

"He believed that after the First Reading of the Home Rule Bill the country would desire, and it had a right to, a long interval of time for its grave and quiet consideration. The Government would utilise that time in pressing on some of their own legislative measures, which they regard as a key to this, such as the reform of the Registration Laws and the affirmation of the principle of 'One man one vote.'"

Now, that is just what we say. We say the country has a right to a careful and quiet consideration of this measure. Is it not strange that since this speech was delivered by the Attorney General the views of the Party opposite have entirely changed? The very moment the Bill is introduced and its details are considered, it is then seen to be an absolute and imperative necessity to carry the Second Reading of the Bill at a rush. We have considered it our duty to try to curtail the velocity of that rush. The right hon. Gentleman the Prime Minister said, with great accuracy and truth, that he did not believe in insinuations. I do not believe anybody can lay such a use of insinuations to his charge; but, unfortunately, the right hon. Gentleman was absent when the Deputy Leader of the House was speaking.

MR. W. E. GLADSTONE: I was summoned away by command.

COLONEL SAUNDERSON: Quite so. We are, unfortunately, aware of that, and we know that the right hon. Gentleman was unavoidably absent, but if he had been present he would have seen that his Colleague had not the same objection to insinuations. The right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer deliberately insinuated that we had made a concerted plan to obstruct the conduct of business in this House.

SIR W. HARCOURT: The right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham said so.

COLONEL SAUNDERSON: I heard the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham absolutely repudiate any such intention. The hon. Member for Northampton said he had read in *The Times* that at a meeting of the Conservative Party held at the Carlton Club it had been deliberately determined to obstruct the Business of the House. The only thing I thought when I heard the hon. Member say that was that it might very well have appeared in another journal, with which he is connected. All I can say is that I was present at that meeting, and no idea of obstruction was entertained for one moment. Certainly, if we can, we intend to prevent your reading your Home Rule Bill a second time. We do not do that with the object of obstructing; we do it with the object of giving the country an opportunity of becoming acquainted with the details of a Bill the like of which has never been presented to this House before. I think the Government look at this question through Grimsby spectacles. They recognise, now the Bill is before the country, that a Second Reading after Easter may have the same disastrous effect upon the Bill as was experienced in 1886. It is because we desire that effect that we oppose your Saturday Sitting, and try to do our best to prevent your forcing this pernicious measure through the House before Easter.

MR. J. PARKER SMITH (Lanark, Partick), who was interrupted on rising, said he only wanted to address a few words to the House, and if he was not heard without interruption he should have to move the Adjournment. The whole case for the Motion had been put on the ground of the Home Rule Bill. But the Chancellor of the Exchequer, when referring to what occurred in 1886, forgot to inform the House that a longer period elapsed between the First and Second Readings of the Home Rule Bill on that occasion than it was proposed should elapse on the present occasion. He omitted to tell them that the period embraced between the two Readings covered the Easter Recess. He omitted another thing also. The Second Reading Debate was not taken from day to day. There were altogether

12 nights, and those were spread over from the 18th of May to the 7th of June, There were long intervals, and the Debate lasted for a month. There could not be any objection to the Debate commencing before Easter, provided the Government followed the precedent set on the former occasion, and provided that a due interval was allowed to elapse before the Second Reading was really taken. He held that they were absolutely entitled to go down to their constituents to discuss this Bill, and that, therefore, it should be allowed to stand over—or at least that the Division on the Second Reading should not be taken—until after the Easter Recess. How did it come that there was so much pressure in regard to this Bill? It was the action of the Government that had brought about the pressure, for at the beginning of the Session, instead of dealing with matters of urgent importance, they spent the time in the introduction of measures which were of no importance. Why did not the Government summon Parliament if they were in such a hurry? The Government had promised that they would summon Parliament early in the year—in January. They did so; but, while they kept their word of promise to the ear, they broke it to the hope—they broke it in every other way, for they only met the House on the last day—the 31st January. No doubt new Members were disposed to do a great many curious things, and he did not know what they were to say with regard to the manner in which the time of the House was being occupied; but he had to remind the House that the right hon. Gentleman the other day said that he considered that the only duty of Members was to "Vote, vote, vote!" He wondered if the right hon. Gentleman expected that each hon. Member should be like Sir Joseph Porter in the opera, who—

"Always voted at his party's call,  
And never thought of thinking for himself at all."

There was, however, a higher duty than voting. They had the duty of bringing forward grievances, of bringing forward questions that affected all parts of this country. It was laid down as the duty of the House of Commons to take up the discussion of grievances on Supply; and he could say that, while the discussion could do the Government no good, it was the

determination of Members to bring forward the questions in which they were interested for discussion in the House of Commons.

Mr. Roby rose in his place, and claimed to move, "That the Question be now put."

Question put, "That the Question be now put."

The House divided:—Ayes 252; Noes 230.—(Division List, No. 28.)

Main Question put accordingly.

The House divided:—Ayes 256; Noes 220.—(Division List, No. 29.)

*Resolved*, That this House do sit To-morrow; that the provisions of Standing Order No. 56 be extended to that Sitting; and that as soon as Government Business is disposed of Mr. Speaker do adjourn the House without Question put.—(*Mr. Gladstone.*)

It being Seven of the clock, Mr. Speaker suspended the Sitting until Nine of the clock.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: Are we to take the Army Estimates to-morrow?

MR. W. E. GLADSTONE: Yes.

## — EVENING SITTING.

### — ORDERS OF THE DAY.

#### — SUPPLY—COMMITTEE.

Order for Committee read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair."

#### THE NEWFOUNDLAND FISHERIES.

MR. FRANCIS EVANS (Southampton), who had given notice of the following Amendment:—

"That, whilst fully recognising the obligation in this country to protect French subjects in the enjoyment of their fishing rights, under the Treaty of Utrecht, on the western and north-eastern shores of Newfoundland, this House deems it equally incumbent on the Government to protect Her Majesty's Colonial subjects in the general use and enjoyment of all their territorial and maritime rights on these coasts; that the terms of arbitration having proved unacceptable to Newfoundland, it is advisable that the arbitration be withdrawn or its terms reconsidered with the assistance of the Government of Newfoundland; and that means should meanwhile be sought to relieve the Colony from the depression consequent on the existence of these unsettled differences, and on account of the heavy losses sustained in the recent calamitous fires,"

said, the questions involved in his proposal were now under discussion in the Newfoundland Legislature, and he was informed by Her Majesty's Government that the premature discussion in the House of Commons of those questions might be, and probably would be, prejudicial to the public interests of the people of Newfoundland and the people of this country. It was his earnest desire to facilitate as much as he could the friendly settlement between the Colony of Newfoundland, Great Britain, and France of the various claims and obligations they were under in relation to the Treaty of Utrecht and subsequent Treaties, but he was by that consideration precluded from proceeding with his Motion. He trusted he might express the hope that Her Majesty's Government would, in consideration of the postponement of the Motion, give their attention to the urgent and pressing needs of the people of Newfoundland, and remember the distress from which they were suffering from the recent calamitous fires, and from the existing condition of things in relation to the difficulties in France.

MR. GIBSON BOWLES (Lynn Regis) said, he had intended seconding the Motion, and inasmuch as the hon. Member had run away from it, and he (Mr. Bowles) considered it extremely urgent, he wished to know from Mr. Speaker whether it would be in Order for him to move it?

\*MR. SPEAKER: No; a Motion of this kind is the exclusive property of the hon. Member who has put it down, and in whose name it stands.

\*SIR CHARLES W. DILKE (Gloucester, Forest of Dean) said, it was evidently impossible for the hon. Member to go on with his Motion in face of the declaration of the Government that in their opinion a discussion upon it would be contrary to the interests of the country and the Colony. At the same time, the ground given was only that the matter was under discussion in the Legislature of Newfoundland, and not the usual reason, that negotiations were going on with any Foreign Powers. The discussions which were proceeding in Newfoundland showed that pressure was being brought to bear in the Colony by the threat of an Act of the Imperial Legislature. He could only say that there were many Members of that House who

would give the hottest possible opposition to any measure for the coercion of the Newfoundland Legislature.

#### UNOFFICIAL MEMBERS' BUSINESS.

##### RESOLUTION.

\*MR. HENRY HOBHOUSE (Somerset, E.), in rising to call attention to the great and growing difficulties in the way of Legislation by Unofficial Members of this House under the present Rules of Procedure; and to move—

"That a Select Committee be appointed to consider whether any, and, if so, what, changes should be made in the present Rules of Procedure in order to enable Unofficial Members to make better use of the time at their disposal for bringing their Bills and Motions before the consideration of the House, and to obtain precedence for important subjects,"

said, the difficulties which lay in the path of private Members desiring to pass Bills or even Motions in the House of Commons were only too obvious to all those who were acquainted with Parliamentary proceedings. Unless a private Member were fortunate enough to obtain a very early place in the Ballot, which occurred within two hours of the meeting of the House, it was certain in the great majority of cases that he would practically have no opportunity of bringing his measures under the consideration of the House. The First Reading of a Bill was an empty form in the case of a private Member's measure, and might very well, he thought, be dispensed with. The Second Reading had to be taken, if at all, *sub silentio*, at the penalty of an immediate objection from some Member who did not wish to listen to the reasons which the Members in charge of a Bill had to argue in favour of the Second Reading. The cases in which Bills which passed the Second Reading received proper consideration at the hands of Select Committees or Grand Committees were very rare indeed. They all knew that discussion in Committee of the whole House was, in the case of a private Member's Bill, a farce, and resulted in Bills being passed without proper consideration, but possibly with a few Amendments imposed by the Government, or Amendments which, though unacceptable in themselves, had to be accepted at the hands of other private Members to save the Bill from being altogether destroyed. Many Bills, sometimes of an important character, came

down from the Upper House, but they had no chance of getting precedence of any kind, because they could not be included in the Ballot at the beginning of the Session, and consequently could not pass into law except with the unanimous approval of the House. The consequence was that many most important measures were kept from the consideration of the House of Commons from year to year. He need only mention one or two such measures. The Bill for conferring the franchise on women was one which interested a very large number of Members of the House, although he was himself personally opposed to it. Year by year that Bill had been excluded from discussion in the House of Commons by defects in the Rules of Procedure. There were other measures, such as Temperance Bills, the Bill for Legalising Marriage with a Deceased's Wife's Sister, and other Bills which would command a majority in the House, but would not be passed for the reasons he had mentioned. There was also the absurd Rule that Motions on questions of great political interest could not be brought forward if there happened to be on the Order Book a Bill relating to the same subject. These difficulties were not only great, but had been growing with great rapidity during the short period of seven or eight years in which he had been a Member of the House. Private Members had lost the very fair chance they had on Tuesday evenings of bringing their Bills under the notice of the House after the Motions had been disposed of, and the much better chance they had of getting their Bills considered after 12 o'clock at night. In former days, also, the system of indiscriminate objections to Bills, not on account of the merits or demerits of the measures themselves, but on account of the supposed demerits of the politician who moved the Bill, was less prevalent. Then a few years ago private Members' Bills, when once in progress in Committee, could not be blocked. At the present time they could be blocked by a single Member objecting after 12 o'clock. The result of the various changes had been in the first place to diminish the quantity of private Members' legislation. He believed that last year only 15 Bills promoted by private Members passed into law. Another and much worse result had been to deteriorate the quality of private

Members' legislation. The few Bills that passed were either swallowed whole on the recommendation of some influential Members of the House or passed into law in a maimed, incomplete, and sometimes illogical shape. The reason was that the only means of proceeding with the Bill was to buy off the opposition by the adoption of Amendments. Such a state of things was neither creditable to Parliament nor satisfactory to the nation at large. Of course, some Members would deny that there was much advantage in private Members legislating at all. He contended, however, that the experience of the recent past showed clearly enough that there were many subjects on which it was not only legitimate and proper for private Members to initiate legislation, but it was actually better for them to legislate than for the Government of the day to do so. Various important Bills had in recent years been passed into law by influential Members, amongst them being the Married Women's Property Act, the Guardians of Infants Act, the London Parochial Charities Act, the Technical Education Acts, the Welsh Intermediate Education Act, the Charities Enquiries Act, the Welsh Sunday Closing Act, the Irish Sunday Closing Act, and Mr. Ritchie's Act for the Regulation of Off Licences. Of course, questions of Government grants of money, or the reorganisation of a Department, or any great constructive scheme naturally fell into the hands of the Government to deal with. But there were great advantages in leaving to private Members the subjects which did not fall into this category, one of them being that such strong Party suspicions and prejudices would not be excited against a Bill introduced by a private Member as against a Bill which was entrusted to the Government of the day. He asked for a Committee to inquire into the subject for two reasons. In the first place, the only way in which an Amendment of the Rules of Procedure could be properly considered and presented to the House in an authoritative way was by referring it to a Committee. It would be useless for a few private Members to put on the Paper a string of Resolutions. He thought it would be presumptuous in them to do so—they certainly would not be able to obtain a discussion. It was before a Select Committee, a small and well-chosen Com-

mittee, that proposals such as this could be thoroughly threshed out, and discussed and presented afterwards to the House in an operative and well-considered form. Secondly, they asked for a Committee on this ground, that although there was an important inquiry into the Rules of Procedure some years ago, yet that Committee, presided over by Lord Hartington, did not consider the effect of the Rules of Procedure on private Members' legislation. It dealt with them far more from the point of view of the Government of the day, and the only proposal it made which assisted private Members was that in all cases their Bills should be referred to a Grand Committee, and should there have precedence. That proposal was only incidental to a general scheme for dividing the House into four Grand Committees, but that plan was never proceeded with. If they looked back to the discussions following upon the inquiry of the Committee, they would see that so long as the interests of the Government were involved, and so long as the Government were anxious to get an alteration of the Rules of Procedure, time was given for their consideration, but that directly it became a question of what alteration should be made in the Rules for the benefit of private Members, the discussion was brought to an end. As those who had watched the procedure of the House for the past six years could testify, the net result of the inquiry and of the alteration in the Rules that followed it was distinctly injurious in various ways to the interests of private Members. There had only been one Rule passed, so far as he knew, to benefit private Members—namely, the Rule of arranging Bills according to the stage they had reached after Whitsuntide; but even that Rule was deprived of a large proportion of its value by the discovery made soon afterwards by the ingenious mind of the Member for North Louth, that without any Question put Mr. Speaker must leave the Chair when the Committee stage was called, and that every Bill which had an Instruction put down to it must immediately go into progress in Committee. The consequence was that after Whitsuntide all Bills in Committee, whether they had been discussed or not, stood on the same footing, and they had had a recent instance of a Bill being discussed at great

length, and finally talked out on a Wednesday after Whitsuntide, because it was known that if it was talked out it could not come on on the following Wednesday. It might be asked if this Select Committee was appointed, what proposals would be brought before it. In the first place, there were many valuable proposals for the improvement of Rules of Procedure already on the Notice Paper of the House, for the consideration of which time had never been found. In the second place, there were many authorities now in Office, and some out of Office besides—official as well as unofficial Members—who could give valuable suggestions on the subject. There were, for instance, his right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster (Mr. Bryce), and the hon. and learned Gentleman the late Solicitor General (Sir E. Clarke), and the Member for Bodmin (Mr. Courtney). If this Committee were once appointed they would have many valuable suggestions to consider. For himself, being a comparatively junior Member of this House, he felt it was somewhat presumptuous to give his own personal view. At the same time, from the position he occupied to-night, he thought he ought to sketch out the lines on which he thought the Rules of the House could be improved for the benefit of private Members. He and those who agreed with him had two main objects in view. In the first place, they wanted to utilise the time at the disposal of private Members better. At present the uncertainty of the time which was at their disposal very much prevented proper arrangements being made. They had, nominally, three private Members' days a week, but the larger part of two of those days was usually taken up by Government business. It would be far better for private Members to have less time given them by the Rules of Procedure if they were more sure of that time. He ventured to suggest that if they could be certain of the whole of Tuesdays throughout the Session the Government might take the whole of Fridays. That, after all, would only be reverting to the old practice. Supply was the first Order on Friday, and it was only owing to a recent alteration of the Rule that he was able here to-night to make his Motion on the Question that Mr. Speaker do leave the Chair. By the omission of a few words in the existing

Rule the Government could have the whole of Friday for Supply and other Government business, and if they had that he thought they might leave Tuesday—for the larger portion of the Session at all events—to private Members. If Tuesdays were thus left to private Members, it would be a great advantage to them, to be able to bring on Bills as well as Motions. This would pretty well double the time at their disposal. If a Bill came from the other House and was taken up by a private Member, precedence might be obtained for it. After Easter Motions would tend to disappear from the Order Paper, and then, instead of discussing vague Resolutions, they might on Tuesdays as well as Wednesdays discuss more definite proposals in the shape of Bills. It ought to be the rule, and not the exception, that Bills which had been read a second time should be referred to a Committee of some kind. After Whitsuntide the Bills might be arranged on Tuesdays and Wednesdays according to the stage they had reached, and it might be determined to make progress with certain Bills before taking up others. Then, again, he thought some machinery should be devised for obtaining precedence for the more important subjects of legislation. Very valuable suggestions on this subject had been made by hon. Members, and had not been carefully considered by any Committee. What ought to be aimed at was, not to give a majority of unofficial Members the power to bring forward a subject over the heads of a substantial minority, but to insure discussion to a Bill which had a substantial amount of support. A book might be provided in which Members could subscribe their names to a Bill or Motion, and if a certain number—100 or more—did this, it should be marked as having precedence. Whatever proposals were made, they could be discussed carefully by a Committee. He did not expect much sympathy from those who regarded the Government of the day as the inspired source from which all legislation must come, but he appealed to the unofficial minds on all sides of the House. This was the beginning of a new Parliament in which more Members than ever were anxious to legislate, and it therefore seemed not an inopportune time to institute an inquiry that might probably

produce results which would enable unofficial Members in future Sessions to take a useful and advantageous part in the work of legislation.

MR. J. E. ELLIS (Nottingham, Rushcliffe) said, he rose for the purpose of seconding the Resolution, and he did so as a pledge of his opinion that reform of some kind was necessary in the interests of private Members. His interpretation of the Motion was that, being limited in its scope, it did not demand that any more of the time of the House should be given to private Members. He brought forward a Motion on the subject last year, when he pointed out to the House that if the Government would keep their hands off Wednesdays they might be free to take either Tuesdays or Fridays. There could be no question that in the present day, with the enormously-increased demand for legislation and for Government action, the existing Rules did not give the Government sufficient command of the time of the House. Happily there was no necessity now to look at the punitive aspect of the matter, for disorderly conduct was amply provided for by the changes made in 1887 and 1888. It might be objected that the inquiry indicated in the Resolution would be too limited in its scope, and, if that were so, there would be no objection to enlarge it, so that it should include the allocation of time as between the Government and private Members. The changed conditions of political and social life, the increase in the number of subjects demanding attention, and the increase in the number of Members who desired to take an active part in the work of the House, had rendered many of the present Rules more or less obsolete. The changes in procedure made in 1888 had worked a revolution in the progress of Business. Whereas at one time there were about 18 opportunities for raising Debate in the passage of a Bill through the House, those had now been reduced to five or six. But the alterations made in 1888 had been for the benefit of the Government of the day, and they had stopped short of anything being done for the unofficial Members. There was no more pathetic spectacle than was witnessed on the second day of every Session of Parliament, when troops of unofficial Members brought up Bills, nearly every one of which was doomed to the fate of never being heard of again. He had before

him a list of Bills so introduced in previous Sessions, from 1888 up to last year, and it was melancholy to find that so many useful measures had to be withdrawn or dropped at once in consequence of the treatment of private Members. He held that private Members' rights ought to be more clearly taken into account, because by the absence of due recognition of their importance grave public wrong was very frequently committed. Of the long list of Bills to which he had referred only two received the Royal Assent and more than 40 never had any discussion at all. This was enough to show that the proceedings on the second day of the Session were a perfect waste of time. There was a portion of the time of the House of which, with a small readjustment of the Rules, some use might be made. Under the Rules the House sat 'till 1 o'clock, but no opposed Business could be taken after 12. He was not in favour of late Sittings, but he was in favour of business being done, and there was no question that the operation of the Twelve o'clock Rule had been entirely to the detriment of unofficial Members. He had placed on the Paper a Resolution which read as follows:—

"That whereas, when it is the evident and general sense and desire of the House to proceed with any particular business it is inexpedient that a single Member should have the power of preventing this, it is resolved that Standing Order I. (Sittings of the House) be amended as follows—namely, page 2, line 2, leave out 'opposed,' and insert after the word 'business' the words 'to which, on the Order relating to it being called, 10 Members shall have objected by rising in their places.'"

That proposal had received the sanction of hon. Members of greater experience in the House than he could lay claim to. There was certainly an amount of contentious legislation involving principle that should not be brought on late at night; but, on the other hand, when legislation of a more or less useful character was brought forward after 12 o'clock it was too much to place in the hands of any hon. Member, by lifting his hat or using the two words "I object," the power to stop Bills of that kind. Therefore, whenever he obtained an opportunity he would move that Resolution, though he did not bind himself as to the number of Members. He proposed, in conclusion, to deal with the principles and the spirit which ought, as it appeared to him, to underlay any

changes that they might make in the procedure of the House. As reported by the Committee which sat in 1848—a Committee consisting of some of the ablest men in the House at that period—the Government of the day must be mainly responsible for the Private Business of the House. He had not himself used the term "private Members"; to his mind the phrase was a misnomer. In the prayers at the commencement of their proceedings they were asked to lay aside all private interests; and borrowing a phrase which had been used with great effect by Lord Palmerston, he would say that private Members' right might often be public wrong. They were there for public objects and public needs; they were servants of the public in that Assembly, and therefore, personally, he had also an objection to the term "private Members." As he had said, the Government of the day should have entire power with regard to the allocation of business, and the responsibility for the use of that power. They must always recognise the power of majorities. There was a great deal of nonsense about the rights of minorities and the rights of majorities. He would point out that the Act of Union between England and Ireland was carried in the first instance by a majority of one; the Reform Bill of 1832 was carried by a majority of one; the Dissolution of Parliament in 1841 was carried by a majority of one; the Public Education under the Privy Council was set up by a majority of two; The Government of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Midlothian (Mr. Gladstone) in 1873 had a majority of three against it; Lord Russell's Administration in 1866 was turned out by a majority of five, and Lord Melbourne was defeated in 1839 by a majority of five. These were very small majorities, but they were majorities that had led to enormous consequences. They must, therefore, respect the principle absolutely and entirely that the majority must rule in the House of Commons. He thought there ought to be some further limitations to opportunities of Debate on particular measures. He greatly preferred that course to a curtailment of the freedom of Debate when they had entered on the consideration of a measure. Members also should have a greater certainty of knowledge as to when particular business

would come on. A great part of the strain and stress of that Assembly arose from the want of certainty with respect to when measures would come on; and he would also point out that whatever control they gave the Government of the business of the House, if the Government was not seconded by the Opposition in the endeavour to bring about the discharge of business undoubtedly their efforts must fail. Therefore, they must all hold that an honourable co-operation between the Opposition and the Government was essential to the furtherance of their proceedings in the House. So much for the principle. With respect to the spirit which ought to underlie all these matters, he thought he could not do better than repeat the words which had been uttered by Mr. Disraeli, who had been saturated by a true instinct with regard to the conduct of the business of the House when he liked. Speaking on the 18th April, 1864, he said—

"What makes the House of Commons so influential in contradistinction to the popular Assemblies of other countries is this: that when there is any great question of difficulty the country feels that we are solving it not merely by the present thought and existing intelligence of the Members of the House, but that we come down to its consideration fortified by precedent, and bringing to bear upon it the accumulated wisdom of the eminent men who have preceded us."

To that sentiment he ventured most humbly and heartily to subscribe. The House had great traditions and great precedents, and there were good reasons for the origin of all their Rules and procedures. He remembered very well the words uttered by Mr. Speaker in 1886 before he was called to the Chair. Mr. Speaker had said—

"As one who has sat in this House for 20 years, may I remind those hon. Gentlemen who, conversant as they are with business of great importance outside this House, are yet taking their places in this Assembly for the first time, may I remind them, as I wish to do without presumption, that the Rules, and Forms, and proceedings of this House are wedded to remote antiquity, that many of them which seem to be new are developments of the old; and that while we have adopted new Rules to suit the supposed requirements of the day, we have even been influenced by a regard for precedent and old times. Many of our Forms and Rules are old, some are new, some are girt with the prescriptive dignity of immemorial custom."

He thought the House could not do better when it came to reform its procedure than to inspire itself with the spirit that animated these eloquent words. It was

because he believed that some of their Rules might be altered with great advantage and to the increased efficiency, and greatness, and dignity of the House of Commons, that he, with pleasure, seconded the Motion before the House.

Amendment proposed,

To leave out from the word "That," to the end of the Question, in order to add the words "a Select Committee be appointed to consider whether any, and, if so, what, changes should be made in the present Rules of Procedure in order to enable Unofficial Members to make better use of the time at their disposal for bringing their Bills and Motions before the consideration of the House, and to obtain precedence for important subjects,"—(Mr. Henry Hobhouse.)

—instead thereof

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question."

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. W. E. GLADSTONE, Edinburgh, Midlothian): Mr. Speaker, I am most anxious to answer at the earliest moment that I can do so my hon. Friend the Seconder of this Motion, who desires to know what view Her Majesty's Government take on this subject. In doing so I shall certainly not approach the matter in a spirit of partisanship. It is a question of extreme interest. The whole matter of the Business of the House has become, not only an important but a capital subject for our consideration. I will pause for a moment to say—though it is a matter on which difference of opinion will exist—that I do not hesitate on this occasion to adhere to the opinion which I have always expressed, that the greatest, most effectual, and only relief which can open the door to anything like a complete solution of this very difficult subject is to be found in the disposal of the Irish Question. The relations between England and Ireland are so strained, and these relations come up for consideration and discussion so frequently, that—though I do not say it is a reason for declining secondary remedies—I say that the grand remedy is only to be found in the direction of settling this difficulty. Unfortunately I missed the opportunity of hearing the speech of the hon. Mover of the Motion through a pure accident, for I had been credibly informed that the Motion had been dropped and was not coming on. But I heard the speech of my hon. Friend the Seconder of the Motion, and I am bound to say that I have great sympathy



with the most part of what he has said on the subject. My position and that of my Colleagues is this—I am not prepared to accede to the Motion proposed in its present form. The proposal is that a Committee shall be appointed for the purpose of considering what can be done to facilitate the work of legislation in the hands of private Members. I would ask the Mover and Seconder of the Motion, first, whether they are prepared to undertake the conduct of that Committee; and, secondly, whether they have a plan which they are ready to submit to that Committee, and upon which they wish to take its judgment. I have not gathered either from what I have heard with my own ears, or from what has been reported to me, that they have an affirmative answer forthcoming to either of those questions.

\***MR. HOBHOUSE**: As the right hon. Gentleman did not hear what I said, I wish to repeat that I feel sure that if the Committee were appointed many Members of the House will be only too glad to offer suggestions for the alteration of the Rules and Orders, and I have traced out a few of the suggestions which I myself would be willing to submit to the Committee.

**MR. W. E. GLADSTONE**: I am much obliged to the hon. Member for giving me that explanation, but it does not in the slightest degree remove my difficulty in the matter. He says that he has not a plan of his own, but that he and other hon. Members will make suggestions. On that point I agree with him altogether. There will, doubtless, be a multitude of suggestions. Suggestions will crop up like mushrooms, and like mushrooms they will quickly disappear, owing to the nature of the ground from which they spring. I can understand a Committee being appointed to consider a strong and definite proposition urged upon it by persons of ability who are prepared to work it out and to bring forward all that can be said in its favour. But that is a different state of things from merely entertaining an opinion—a benevolent opinion I will admit—that a multitude of suggestions will be forthcoming, and that the hon. Member himself is prepared to make a contribution to the stock of these suggestions. Sir, that affords me little hope. This proposal is that the Government, which is charged up to the full

extent of its powers, and as all opponents and some friends think beyond its powers, with engagements already, shall in cold blood—for undoubtedly we are now sitting in cold blood, after the heat and excitement of the Morning Sitting—undertake a new engagement without any minute calculation of their powers of redeeming it. That is a serious difficulty. But there are other difficulties. My hon. Friend who seconded the Motion has given a touching description of what may be called the Ballot scene. I feel most sincerely, I may say profoundly, for the difficulties of the private Members—nay, more, I will say, as a citizen and not merely as a Minister anxious to shirk duties that can be honourably avoided, I look with some jealousy and regret at the constantly and rapidly-growing tendency to throw all legislation into the hands of the Government. I cannot forget that not only many useful suggestions have been made in a rudimentary form by the Bills of private Members, but that also Bills of great importance were proposed and carried by private Members. I take the case that crops up first in my mind—the great Currency Bill of Sir Robert Peel, which placed our currency substantially on the footing which it has ever since retained for 70 years. Another Bill was that proposed by Lord John Russell in 1828 for the relief of the Nonconformists from the disabilities they suffered under, and which he succeeded in inducing the House to sanction by a vote against the Government of the Duke of Wellington, which was afterwards taken up by the Government, and which became law. I look with great satisfaction on that department of work of the House of Commons, and I wish it could be restored. But is it in course of being restored? Does it subsist without change? No, Sir, on the contrary, almost every week of the Session gives indications and proofs of an increasing desire on the part of various sections and classes of the community in various divisions of the country to see the particular subjects in which they are interested taken up by the Government, and taken out of the hands of private Members. If it were necessary to go behind the scenes and speak of the particular measures now in the hands of the Government, there are some which I, for one, should be

most happy to see in the hands of private Members, and which I think may even have had a fair chance of progress in their hands, because so long as legislation is in the hands of private Members it is less marked with the character of Party than when it is in the hands of the Government. That seems to me a very important consideration. My hon. Friend made a remark which I cannot pass without comment. It was a proposition which might have for its effect the tendency of increasing public expenditure. I am glad that the House should keep a tight hand on Supply, but, as far as I see, most of the influence now exercised in Supply by the House of Commons is influence which tends in the direction of increasing and not diminishing the expenditure. That is a very serious matter, but it is not a matter for our consideration at the present moment. But I see no evidence that there is a plan prepared by the Proposer and Seconder of this Motion which would help us in a Committee and which might afford hope of a settlement. It is a difficulty which, with the engagements we now have, I do not think we as a Government could add to by adding a new engagement in carrying through a Committee on a subject of this kind. I hope my hon. Friend will not think me captious when I say that I do not think this is quite the time of the year for the appointment of a Committee. In my opinion, the question of procedure does not advantageously mix with the general business and policy of the House; and a subject of this nature, if it is to be entertained, should be entertained at the beginning of the Session and before the House has got so involved, I may say entangled, in a mass of general business. It is almost idle for it to think of making additions of an extraneous character to that mass of business. I frankly agree that the arrangements of business at present are not satisfactory either in the view of the Government or in the view of private Members—I will not say in the interests of the Government or in the interests of private Members, because neither the Government nor the private Members ought to have any interest at all in the matter except the promotion of public interests and the despatch of business. I do not think that at the present moment the arrangements are good for one or the

other. What are the arrangements? If you take the available time of private Members and the results which they are enabled to achieve, the question is most unsatisfactory and requires consideration. At the same time, how far do the rights of private Members go? Let us see what they are. Setting aside occasional proposals for sitting on Saturday—which can never become a rule except for special purposes of Supply—there are five days in the week. What is the condition of the private Members, and what is the condition of the Government on Paper, in principle with regard to those five days? There are five days available to the Government and private Members. Private Members have Question time. We are apt to consider Question time as a trifle. I have no means of stating it precisely, but on three or four days a week Questions as a rule occupy an average of an hour, or at any rate the time approaches an hour. To whom does that hour belong? Why, to private Members. The average sitting of the House—and Heaven knows nobody would like to prolong it—is nine hours. That one hour is a tax of 11 per cent. upon the Sittings of the House. I take the four days which are considered principal days. Well, there are five days. Two of these are devoted to Motions which are in the hands of private Members. Tuesday is absolutely so devoted, and Friday has changed its condition. When the present system with respect to Friday was first recommended it was expected and anticipated that the casual Motions of Members would only occupy a portion of the evening, and that a large part would be realised and turned to account by successive Governments for purposes of Supply. Now, for a long period, I believe I may say that as to the ordinary Fridays the Government has had no direct or separate interest in them whatever. That is a second day for private Members out of five. Then comes Wednesday, which is absolutely the property of private Members. On the two days, Monday and Thursday, upon the first entry into Supply, by a Rule of this House, the propriety of which I do not call into question, the private Member is entitled to anticipate the proceedings of the Government by proposals which delay the entrance into Supply. Then there is another subject,

in my opinion of great importance, to which it is absolutely necessary upon an occasion like this to recall attention—and that is the case of the Address. An immense change—in my opinion, a most disastrous change—has taken place with regard to the Address. Some old-fashioned people like myself have endeavoured, when they could, to make some kind of protest in favour of, or have wished to secure adhesion to, the ancient practice of passing the Address with only passing comment, except on the rare occasions when it might be right to make it the subject of serious challenge amounting to a Vote of Want of Confidence. But now the Address occupies, as it did this year and in some former years, two weeks, or about a tenth part of the Session, and without any result of a substantive or tangible kind beyond the airing of complaints and propositions without the possibility of doing anything. If you look at the case of the private Member from that point of view he is indeed the favoured child of fortune, and there is nothing but shreds and fragments left for the Government of the country. That is the picture drawn by an impartial, if a feeble hand, of the private Member as he stands with regard to his abstract rights and possessions. But I am far from saying that the proposal now before the House is irrational, or that there is no cause for complaint. Just as the rich man is subject to the incursions of the pickpocket and burglar so the position of the private Member makes him the object of the covetous desires of the Government, and from a sense of public duty the Government is continually running in upon the private Member and taking away his privileges. I think the portion taken from him in the last Parliament was larger than had ever been taken before—I mention it not as a matter of blame, but as a fact—and it is very likely that there will be an increasing tendency in that direction. It appears to me that, whatever the private Member has, he ought to have some reasonable certainty as to his time, and that it would be idle to appoint a Committee to cut and carve these large domains at present appropriated to the private Member unless that uncertainty can be removed. I am by no means sure that the procedure by Committee is the best method of procedure, and, for my own part, I would

far rather see some proposals of a definite character, on the responsibility of the Government if you like or on the responsibility of any body of independent Members ready to press them forward with the whole weight of their influence. In order to understand this question we should have in view what is the relative importance of the sphere of private legislation and the sphere of public legislation at the present moment. As I have said, I am not one of those who are contending for the maintenance of the sphere of Government legislation at its present extent. I am sincerely sorry that the sphere of Government legislation has been so largely extended. Whether it can be contracted I will not say. I do not despair of seeing the activity of private Members made more profitable by some judicious arrangement of the time which the House may be disposed to give. The division of time between the Government and what are called private Members gives you a basis upon which you can proceed. I do not want an indefinite postponement in this matter; in fact, I am anxious for an early settlement. But private Members will never get the certainty that I speak of as long as in the abstract they are entitled to this long and imposing list of privileges, which leave so little to the Government. Therefore, I would really point out to the Mover and Seconder that, to take things in their right order, the first and absolutely essential condition of progress in this matter is that at the proper time—which I do not think is the present moment, when we have gone through nearly one-fourth part of the ordinary Session, and are engaged in the thickest of our business—when the House sees its way to giving a free and independent attention to the subject, some practical proposal may be made. It is quite evident that it is necessary to make some arrangement a great deal more rational than the one we have at present. I think the nominal division of time gives too much to private Members, but gives it in a manner so unsatisfactory, so uncertain, and so liable to continual aggression, that no tolerable result remains, when you take into view the uncertainty and the capricious manner in which it must necessarily work. The main bar in our way is the condition in which we stand, and the state of business is such that we are obliged to do what we

have done to-day—without praise or blame to anybody, I refer to it—that is, to spend a whole day in discussing what we shall do on the next day. I am bound to say I hold firmly to two propositions—first, that the Government ought to have charge of the conduct of an inquiry of this kind; and, secondly, that it would be idle to consider the division of time, and the liberties now nominally allotted to private Members, until we know that we have arrived at something like a final decision as to the grand question of the division of the entire time of the House between the two great claimants—namely, the Government on one side, and the body of private Members on the other. I hope I have not been wholly unsympathetic with the object of the Motion; I have only endeavoured to show that in its present form it would be inconsistent with our public duty at the present moment to recommend it to the House.

\*SIR J. FERGUSSON (Manchester, N.E.): I hope it will not be thought impertinent on my part if I follow the Prime Minister, for I am one of the few Members of the House who can carry his Parliamentary life back to some of the periods to which the right hon. Gentleman referred. I remember particularly the time when the change was made, by which private Members surrendered so large a possession of the time at their disposal. The right hon. Gentleman will remember when, in Lord Palmerston's Government, the present arrangement was made that private Members should move Amendments to Supply on Friday. Previous to that the Government had only had two days in the week for their business, of which Monday was one and Friday nominally the other. But on Fridays private Members enjoyed the privilege of speaking on the Motion at the commencement of business—"That the House, at its rising, do adjourn until Monday next." That Debate was frequently carried on for a long time, and the time at the disposal of the Government was very short indeed. I remember very well when Lord Palmerston pointed out to the House that it was impossible the Public Business of the country could be got through with the large amount of time devoted to private Members. Thereupon private Members were called upon to give up Thursday to the Government, while the Government had Friday nominally for

Supply, subject to Amendments put down to that Motion. That constituted a considerable diminution of the rights, as they were called, of private Members, and I doubt very much if private Members could have foreseen at that time how largely their rights would be curtailed, whether they would have agreed to the change with so much unanimity. The result has been that the time left to private Members has been very short, and even that has been considerably curtailed from time to time by the exigencies of the Government. These exigencies are not likely to diminish. The demands of the country for legislation are constantly increasing, and, year after year, a larger proportion of the time of private Members is appropriated by the Government until, at last, the chances of private Members for legislation are very small indeed. If the hon. Member who has made this Motion; and the Seconder, had had no other success than to have elicited the speech of the Prime Minister, to which we have just listened, they would have no reason to regret it. It must always be a great pleasure to the House to listen to the reflections of the right hon. Gentleman when a question quite apart from Party is before the House, as in his disquisition on the procedure of the House, so largely of a discursive and academical character. But I am afraid that much of a practical conclusion would not be arrived at from the way in which the right hon. Gentleman has treated the proposal. The right hon. Gentleman has stated that the period of the Session is unfavourable, and that if the proposal had been made at an earlier period of the Session we should have had more time to consider it. He has also said that he does not consider a Select Committee would be the most convenient way of dealing with it. It occurred to me, when the right hon. Gentleman was speaking, that if a Select Committee was not the most convenient way of considering this question, I could hardly imagine how it could possibly be brought to a practical solution. I have generally found, looking over a considerable experience, that all great changes in the procedure of this House have been proposed by Select Committees. Such was the case in 1886. It is not for me to say whether it will suit the convenience of the Government to institute an inquiry at

the present time; but I cannot imagine that any changes such as are suggested can be conveniently arrived at without preliminary inquiry by a Select Committee. The number of competitors among private Members is now so great that there must be a number of disappointments, and it must be admitted that the number of gentlemen who were anxious and capable of speaking with intelligence on many subjects is infinitely greater than it used to be some years ago. Therefore, under any conceivable mode of procedure, the number of questions that can be disposed of on the initiation of private Members is constantly increasing, and these increasing demands are less capable of being dealt with. There are many measures introduced by private Members which are carried to a successful completion. The right hon. Gentleman will remember, among others, how some very useful measures were carried by the late Mr. Heuley. If hon. Members are fortunate in gaining possession of the House early in the Session, there is no reason at all why they should not be successful in carrying useful measures. We need go no further back than the time of the late Mr. Bradlaugh, who carried measures, although with the assistance of the Government of the day. But the attainment of anything like a distribution of the time of the House between private Members and the Government must always be subject to the exigencies of the Government of the day, as has been shown in recent Sessions. I doubt much that the present Bill will result in getting the Irish Question out of the way. The demands of private Members must be ever increasing, and as the competition goes on it must lead to disappointment. But perhaps some means may be found by the institution of a Committee by whom a selection may be made of the measures of which the great majority of the House approve and attach importance to, and by which the inferior measures may be eliminated, and the attention of the House concentrated on those which have a chance of passing. The desire of all who really wish this House should continue to be the great instrument of good to the country, to give satisfaction to the legitimate aspirations of the people, must be directed to simplifying our procedure and securing adequate discussion of those measures calculated to be for the public good, and

any Members who can contribute to such a desirable result must deserve the gratitude of the House, and the fullest attention for the measures they propose. I fear the discussion of this evening can lead to no practical result, but I venture to think, with all submission and with the greatest respect for the experience and opinion of the Prime Minister, if we are ever to arrive at a solution of this great question it must be obtained by the medium of a Select Committee.

\*SIR JOHN LUBBOCK (London University) said he must confess it really appeared to him that though the Prime Minister did not see his way to accept the Motion, the greater part of his speech was in support of it. The right hon. Gentleman did not quite appreciate the object they had in view, which was not a desire to appropriate any more time of the Government. It had been pointed out how many great measures had been inaugurated and carried to a successful conclusion by the exertion of unofficial Members. They knew that the great questions of Reform and Free Trade were in the hands of private Members before they were taken up by the Government, and, in addition to those and many others, he might mention the Free Libraries Act and the whole of our law in relation to bills of exchange and cheques. Then the right hon. Gentleman went on to complain of the tendency to throw the whole duty of legislation upon the Government. That was exactly the tendency which his hon. Friend complained of, and one great object of the Resolution that had been moved was to some extent to relieve Her Majesty's Government of that great burden which they felt so acutely, and to give to unofficial Members the opportunity of assisting them in this respect. On both these points, therefore, the right hon. Gentleman agreed with the argument laid before the House by his hon. Friend. It must be admitted that of late years private Members had been subjected to great difficulties in bringing on questions in which they were interested. Of course, the Twelve o'Clock Rule interfered with all legislation to some extent, though in many respects it pressed more heavily upon private Members than upon the Government, because they all knew it was continually suspended with refer-

ence to the legislation of the Government, and he did not remember that it had ever been suspended for the advantage of any measure brought forward by a private Member. Another point his hon. Friends did not allude to, and that was the practice of putting down Private Business on private Members' nights, the result of which was to further circumscribe the time of private Members. But the right hon. Gentleman scarcely did justice to the hon. Member for Somerset (Mr. Henry Hobhouse) and the Seconder of the Resolution by assuming they had not made any practical suggestions, because both hon. Gentlemen had made suggestions which they believed would have the effect of increasing the usefulness of time at the disposal of private Members. They balloted now on the first evening of the Session for places for the whole period of the Session, and his hon. Friend made proposals worthy of consideration, whether they might not assimilate the Rule for balloting for Bills to that for Motions, and limit those to a certain period. His hon. Friend also suggested that Bills might take their place with Notices of Motion on a Tuesday, and that would be another step that would facilitate the opportunities private Members had for bringing forward Bills for discussion in this House. His hon. Friend referred also to the extraordinary power they gave to individual Members after a certain hour, and suggested they might alter the rule very simply by limiting the power to, say, 10 Members. If that were done it would very much increase the opportunity of private Members carrying legislative measures which, under the existing rule, it was almost impossible for them to do. Moreover, even when they did so it was often much impaired in its character. It was, of course, necessary to make friends on all sides of the House, and to agree to matters disadvantageous in themselves, thus to buy off opposition in order to make any progress at all. It was urged by his hon. Friend, and the view was supported by the right hon. Gentleman who had just sat down (Sir J. Fergusson), that there was no way of seriously considering this question except by a Committee of this House. The Prime Minister suggested the hon. Member for Somerset (Mr. Henry Hobhouse) should formulate his proposals, and then bring them before the House, but he (Sir J.

Lubbock) would ask what chance his hon. Friend would have of bringing them before the House if he did formulate his proposals? How, at the present moment, would it be possible for them to consider all the details and all the different questions affecting them with advantage? They all knew that in all the important affairs of life they could not draw up Reports and consider rules in large meetings; they referred them to small committees, who brought them forward in a satisfactory form so that they might be fairly considered. He felt himself very strongly the disadvantages in which, under the present rules, private Members were placed. Many of them were deprived of the opportunities which they wished to enjoy of bringing forward measures in which they were interested. The present Rules sadly diminished the opportunities of private Members, and although he quite admitted that it would not be desirable to take up more of the time of the House, or deprive the Government of any of the time now at its disposal, he thought most of them felt that a better distribution of the time, and a better set of rules in reference to that time, without taking up the time of the House, might enable the private Members to use that time to better advantage. It was on these grounds he regretted that the Government did not see their way to grant a Committee. Though the conclusion of the right hon. Gentleman was unfavourable, his speech throughout was an encouragement to persevere. The right hon. Gentleman was in favour of the proposal, but said the time was not suitable. They had brought it forward at the earliest time, and he was afraid in no future Session were they likely to get an earlier opportunity of bringing forward a Motion of this kind, and though they would have been glad to do so sooner, still they had a considerable time at their disposal, and he thought that if a Committee were granted they need not despair of bringing it to a satisfactory conclusion. Even the right hon. Gentleman thought they should not despair of seeing some better distribution of the time of private Members. The right hon. Gentleman complained that the Government were overweighted with work, but if the Committee were appointed, the conduct of the proposal might be left mainly to private Members. At present much of the time of

private Members was wasted, and he believed that a Committee would be useful to economise the time allotted to them, especially having regard to the disadvantage at which they were placed by the Twelve o'Clock Rule.

\*SIR RICHARD TEMPLE (Surrey, Kingston) said, that the private Members sitting on that side of the House were very much touched by the description given by the Prime Minister of the extraordinary advantages they possessed. That was news to them, because they were really under the impression they never got anything as private Members. The right hon. Gentleman was a great master of quotations from the Latin poets; might he recall to the recollection of the House the Latin verse—

"O fortunati nimium, sua si bona norint."

The private Members were too fortunate if they could only be made to see their good fortune. The right hon. Gentleman truly remarked that things appeared different in this House according to the point of view from which Members regarded them. For instance, the right hon. Gentleman spoke apparently with some interest of the Parliamentary fortnight taken up this year in the Debate on the Address. Surely that practice of occupying the first two weeks on the Address was not originated by the Party to which he (Sir R. Temple) belonged, but it was really carried through by the Party who now sat opposite, and now they were "hoist with their own petard." Then, again, the right hon. Gentleman remarked upon the great increase of business which came to the Government in taking up Bills, but had he forgotten that he himself was the greatest offender, because this Session he had crowded the House with Bills of the most contentious character. When the right hon. Gentleman complained of the Government being made more and more to take up Bills at the instance of private Members, it should be remembered it was because private Members had come to think that it was only Bills taken up by Government at the instance of a private Member that had any chance at all, nor had it. Now, having listened carefully to what had been said by the hon. Mover and Seconder of this Resolution, he should like, as a private Member, to make a few remarks upon the existing practice and Rules of the House, and perhaps

he was particularly qualified to do so, for no Member knew better than he did the wearied vigils in the small hours of the morning in watching over Bills that struggled on through an unhappy existence only to be massacred at the end of it; but when he came to think of it, the difficulties of passing private Members legislation did seem to him to operate as a very useful check, and he would invite any conscientious private Member to look at the Order Book of the House and consider the number, the great number, of private Members' Bills brought in every Session. He asked what would become of the country if all those Bills had any chance of passing into law? He did not believe he should be overstating it if he said that upon the average 400 or 500 Bills every Session were introduced into this House. He believed that would be found to be the average during the seven or eight years he had been in Parliament, and if they were to pass in any large numbers, would there not be a great danger of over legislation? He was very much impressed with what fell from the right hon. Gentleman the Member for South Aberdeen, who was now the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster (Mr. Bryce). No doubt there were a great number of Bills passed into law at the instance of private Members, and it was a great pity that Members like the Member for the University of London (Sir John Lubbock), who had just spoken, should have been hampered and hindered in much of the beneficent legislation they introduced; but still, all Members must be aware that numbers of the measures were pressed on their attention by their constituents or sections of their supporters, and they were obliged to introduce them, though perhaps they were measures that ought not to pass into law. They did their duty to their friends outside, they satisfied the requirements of public opinion, and it was for the House to decide upon them. But there was no doubt that private Members now had no chance at all. In the first place the Government generally took up the whole time, or a great portion of the whole time, of the House very soon after the Session began. Secondly, they must admit that they themselves were very neglectful, because when private Members did get an evening for themselves, unless the Government kept a House they had no chance. Private Members would not stand by one

another, and the consequence was that without the support of the Government there would be a premature count out. Then one great difficulty before them was this, that when a private Member did get the first place on a list he would monopolise the whole time of the House, the whole time of that afternoon or evening. For instance, Wednesday after Wednesday Bills that stood first on the list were brought forward. The Bill might not be of great interest, but it would probably be debated the whole afternoon, and without the slightest mercy or compassion to those who came after. Of course if they were to be a little more considerate to those that stood second, third, fourth, or fifth there might be a chance, but what happened was this, the man who got first place took up the whole afternoon. Much had been said about the working of the ballot at the beginning of the Session. He had taken part in those scenes that had been described as much as anyone. But he must admit the ballot could be made to operate in a satisfactory manner, because it was in the power of any large number of Members who were interested in any particular measure to ballot for that one measure, and if 20 or 30 would do that they were sure to secure the first place on some convenient day, so that the ballot did give a power to private Members which, if judiciously exercised, would relieve it from that discredit which the hon. Mover and Secondor endeavoured to throw upon it. Take such a measure as Women's Suffrage, if a sufficient number could be induced to ballot on the first day of the Session for that particular measure it would be introduced under the most favourable circumstances. The reason why that had not been done was because though there were many Members who were the friends of the measure, every one of them had measures of his own, which, owing to his particular promises and obligations, he was bound to ballot for first. Had it not been for that there was no doubt that such a measure would, Session after Session, obtain a most favourable place. So, if they came to think of it, by combining their forces the best Bill will be ballotted for by the greatest number of Members and would secure a place. The same remark applied to balloting for Resolutions. If there was any subject which a great number of hon.

Members desired to Debate they certainly could, by concentrating their ballot, by combination at the ballot, secure a place. He believed the process by little syndicates had become well-known amongst Members of this House. He thought he heard the phrase, now common amongst them, of "rigging the ballot." He understood the phrase to mean that a great number of hon. Members combined would ballot for a particular Resolution or particular Bill. Let them take one or two instances. Look what a favourable place the Railway Rates Resolution got the other day. No doubt that was because a great number of Members simultaneously and collectively ballotted for it, and he had no doubt if the real history of the Rating of Machinery Bill were known it was owing to the same cause. Hon. Members from Ireland had not ballotted much this Session—but last Session and the Session before it was notorious that whenever Members from Ireland wished to bring forward a particular matter they were sure to get the best place, and that was done by the process he had described, which was quite legitimate, and a process they had the right to exercise and carry into action. English and British Members might well follow their example, and in that way a precedence could readily be obtained, and obtained in a secret, silent, and unobjectionable manner. He submitted that was far better than the procedure suggested, which he understood to be that Members should be invited to subscribe their names to a list or some "round robin" process in favour of Bills they supported. They knew how that would work, there would be touting, and the result would be that certain Bills would be supported by some Members because they in turn would get support for some other measure. That, in his opinion, would be open to greater objection than the ballot, which was satisfactory if hon. Members chose to combine, and would settle the mode and method of that combination. Then he listened with great attention to what was said by the right hon. Member for the London University (Sir John Lubbock), about the rule that now existed of an individual Member being able to object to a Bill after a certain hour in the evening. The hon. Member proposed that it should be necessary for 10 Members to object, that was to say, that unless 10 Members rose in their places or lifted their hats the



objection should not hold good. He had no doubt that would operate in favour of the first Bill that stood on the Notice Paper; the first Bill of which the title was read by the Clerk of the House would undoubtedly be favoured by that process, but they would get no farther. That particular question would at once be brought forward, the Question would be put by Mr. Speaker "That the Bill be now read a second time," it would then be debated and the Debate would last as long as the House would consent to sit, because after all there would have to be some limit of time. At present the limit of 12 o'clock held good, but if this rule about the 10 Members was introduced they would have to fix a limit of time.

MR. J. E. ELLIS : One o'clock is the limit already fixed by the Rules.

SIR RICHARD TEMPLE said in that case the Bill would go on until 1 o'clock, but all the others would get no chance; in fact, the process would be a miniature reproduction of what went on upon a Wednesday, when, as they all knew, only the first Bill stood any chance, unless a rule prevailed, a sort of unwritten law, that the man who stood first would try and give a chance to him who came next, but at present he saw little signs of any reciprocity. Of course with all this cutting up of the time of private Members, with all this destruction of their opportunities, they must take their revenge. There seemed to be a sort of fate, a sort of providence sitting up aloft like one of the three fates in the story, that always had the scissors in her hand for the purpose of cutting off the lives of the Bills of private Members. That being the case they must have their revenge somewhere, and there was a great deal of truth in what the Prime Minister said, that the first means was by the process of questioning. Questioning in this House would become a very important feature in our national life. They were appealed to by their constituents to put questions, and accordingly they did so, and he believed that had an excellent effect. To him it was a highly gratifying spectacle to see the attention given by hon. Members to everything that went on, not only in the United Kingdom, but all over the world, from India to Peru. He believed that questions exercised a most potent check

on every Government and every Front Bench, whether that Front Bench was filled from their Benches, or from the Benches of hon. Gentlemen opposite. And their second mode of revenge was discussion in Committee of Supply. He quite admitted that as a financial discussion their Debates in Supply were beneath criticism, but in reference to general policy they did the House infinite credit. As for the proposal to appoint a Select Committee upon the subject, if the Mover and Seconder chose to amuse themselves in that way they were welcome to do so. But he knew from experience that such an inquiry as was proposed would come to nothing. He was in favour of the rights of private Members, but that would not get them out of the difficulty that was now the subject of complaint.

MR. COURTNEY (Cornwall, Bodmin) : I wish to congratulate the hon. Baronet on the optimistic view he takes of everything that has been arranged in this best-of-all possible worlds. Perhaps his satisfaction is not unconnected with the fact that he has been able, after some years of labour, to bring to a successful conclusion a great work which he undertook in connection with elementary education. But that does not mean all the work we have to accomplish, and it may be that if we put our business on a rather better footing, we may be able to attain the same result with less expenditure of labour and less weariness than the hon. Baronet must have suffered before his ideal was reached. Sir, I feel in some difficulty in entering into this Debate. The Prime Minister did not hear the speech of the opener, but he made a very amusing and interesting speech in reply; but I have a difficulty in replying to the right hon. Gentleman in his absence. My right hon. Friend assumed that my hon. Friend the Member for East Somerset laid no plan before the House. But he did lay a plan before the House. The right hon. Gentleman said that private Members had a great deal of time. It is not a question of a division of time. The whole question is, given the quantity of time allotted to private Members, is that time well organised? The Prime Minister did not meet that question at all. There is a great deal of time at the command of private Members, able, apt to give it up without

Then the right hon. Gentleman referred to the time consumed in questions. Is that time well organised? How much of it is wasted? Is there not a demand there for inquiry in that direction? And we will not set the matter right unless there are some parties to consider that among other things. Hon. Members will join with my hon. Friend the Member for East Somerset in admitting some curtailment of private Members' time, if only the time that was left to them might be better administered and more economically used. The right hon. Baronet opposite, in the optimistic view he took of the situation, said we were able to avoid the chances of the ballot by the secret organisation of hon. Members amongst themselves, so that those interested in a particular question may join in balloting for a place. The right hon. Baronet prefers that things should be done in that way rather than by some regular machinery. It is a mere matter of hazard whether certain questions are discussed or not, and methods ought to be devised to ensure, with every regard for the rights of minorities, that subjects should be brought forward in order, according to their relative importance and the interest which they excite. For example, we should arrange: first, that a Bill in which interest is felt should be brought forward in its turn, and then for the prosecution of that Bill to the end, so that time would never be wasted in ineffectual discussion. Under the rules and customs of the House it is possible for a single Member, in a fantastic and arbitrary way, to stop the progress of a measure. Is not that a matter for which a practical remedy can be found if the subject be investigated? Years ago I suggested that about once a fortnight we should have a short Bill night for the discussion and prosecution of short Bills, to which a certain definite number of hon. Members should not have signified opposition beforehand. By such means beneficial changes in the law might be effected which now it is possible to have postponed year by year by the action of some irresponsible Member. The First Lord of the Treasury told us that this is not the proper time for making the suggestion which the right hon. Gentleman did, <sup>lawless</sup> and did not understand. escaped justice. ... Friend had great gifts VOL. ... all admire, and has given them this evening another illustration of his

charming capacity of dealing with large public subjects in a pleasant familiar way. But I am bound to say that my right hon. Friend has one faculty which is open to criticism. There is a French word *banalité* which perhaps describes the right hon. Gentleman's method of treating certain questions. When the right hon. Gentleman told us that this is not the time for approaching this subject and that the proposed way of dealing with it is not the right way, one wondered when the right time would be and what would be the proper way. Is it too late in the Session to bring this subject forward? I venture to say that had it been brought forward a fortnight ago we would have been told that it was too early, and that if it had been delayed to the end of the Session, we would have been told that it was then too late. If the hon. Member for East Somerset's Motion does not produce any immediate result, it will at any rate prepare the minds of hon. Members for the changes that must sooner or later be effected. Given a limited amount of time at our command and a diversity of objects to be prosecuted in that time, surely we ought to ascertain how best to employ our opportunities. Now everything is left to chance. What the hon. Member for East Somerset asks is that the mind of the House should be brought to bear on the subject. He proposes a plan, and the Prime Minister says this is not the time or the way to undertake the business, but probably the House will be able to undertake it at no distant date. The mere sense of disgust which one sees growing among the new Members who are not accustomed to the dilatory forms of the House, at the way the time of the House was wasted, will sooner or later claim consideration of the matter, and will, I would hope, lead to some practical steps for doing away with a state of things which is really a matter of public scandal.

SIR EDWARD CLARKE (Plymouth): The few minutes that are left to me I wish to take the opportunity of saying a few words on the subject—a subject which I have myself more than once brought before the House. The objections made to the appointment of a Select Committee by the Prime Minister are certainly curious. First he said the Motion was not made at the beginning of the Session. But it has been brought forward at the earliest opportunity

Secondly, the right hon. Gentleman said the Government would have imposed upon them the duty of dealing with the arrangements of the Select Committee. I do not think that that would be the case. If the House were to agree to this proposal, there would be no duty or obligation laid upon the Government, for the House itself would constitute the Committee. Another objection by the Prime Minister was that there was no specific plan proposed in the Motion before the House. If there had been a specific proposal in the Motion it would have been made the groundwork of debate, and upon the merits of the proposal a whole evening would have been spent. I have more than once expressed a belief to the House that it would be wise to bring about a change of practice so as to make the procedure of the House of Commons similar to that of all other legislative Assemblies in the world in this respect—that the unfinished business of one Session should be carried on and taken up in the next. I believe that would be found to be the true remedy for the difficulty. But whatever the remedy may be, it is a little hard on the part of the Government that they should set themselves steadily against the appointment of a Committee to inquire into the matter. I do not say that the result of a Committee would be satisfactory in all respects, but the proposal is one which the Government ought, in the circumstances, to accept. It is time that we should establish some system by which the House itself would be able to decide what measures it will entertain and what Bills it will pass into law. I do not know whether it is intended to press this Motion to a Division, but I hope the subject will not be lost sight of, notwithstanding the attitude of the Government.

\*MR. HOBHOUSE said, he had to express deep regret at what had fallen from the lips of the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the House, as he thought the Government might have agreed to the appointment of this Committee. He, at any rate, had done his part in regard to this matter. Having brought it forward and having elicited most interesting views upon it, he was not disposed to press his Motion to a Division; but he hoped the discussion would bear some fruit in the future.

*Sir Edward Clarke*

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

SUPPLY.—Committee To-morrow.

#### MESSAGE FROM THE LORDS.

That they have agreed to the Trade Union Provident Funds Bill, without Amendment.

#### DAY INDUSTRIAL SCHOOLS (SCOTLAND) [EXPENSES].

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Resolved, That it is expedient to authorise the payment, out of moneys to be provided by Parliament, of contributions towards the expenses of children sent to Day Industrial Schools, not exceeding one shilling per head per week in the case of children sent by order of a court, and not exceeding sixpence per head per week in the case of children sent without an order of a court, in pursuance of any Act of the present Session to make provision for the establishment of Day Industrial Schools in Scotland, and to amend the Education (Scotland) Acts 1872 to 1883.

Resolution to be reported upon Monday next.

#### BARBED WIRE FENCES BILL.—(No. 176.)

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Clause 3.

Amendment proposed,

In page 2, at beginning of line 1, to insert the words "Where there is on any land adjoining a highway within the county or district of a local authority a fence made with barbed wire, or in or on which barbed wire has been placed, and such barbed wire is dangerous to persons or animals using such highway."—(*Mr. Henry H. Fowler*).

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

Committee report Progress; to sit again upon Monday next.

#### SELECTION (STANDING COMMITTEES.)

SIR JOHN R. MOWBRAY reported from the Committee of Selection; That they had discharged the following Members from the Standing Committee on Law, and Courts of Justice, and Legal Procedure: Sir George Russell, Sir Thomas Esmonde, and Sir Ughtred Kay-Shuttleworth; and had appointed in substitution: Mr. Wootton-Isaacson, Mr. Maurice Healy, and Sir Henry Roscoe.

Report to lie upon the Table.

House adjourned at twenty minutes  
after Twelve o'clock.

## HOUSE OF COMMONS,

*Saturday, 11th March 1893.*

The House met at Twelve of the clock.

**MOTIONS.****LOCAL GOVERNMENT PROVISIONAL ORDER BILL.**

On Motion of Sir Walter Foster, Bill to confirm a Provisional Order of the Local Government Board relating to the borough of Cheltenham, ordered to be brought in by Sir Walter Foster and Mr. Henry H. Fowler.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 257.]

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT PROVISIONAL ORDERS (NO. 2) BILL.**

On Motion of Sir Walter Foster, Bill to confirm certain Provisional Orders of the Local Government Board relating to the urban sanitary districts of Bradford (Yorks.), Brentford, Epsom, New Windsor, Stoke-upon-Trent, and Wigan, and to the Hertford and Ware Joint Hospital District, ordered to be brought in by Sir Walter Foster and Mr. Henry H. Fowler.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 258.]

**NOTICES.****TELEGRAPHIC COMMUNICATIONS WITH LIGHTHOUSES, &c.**

MR. J. LOWTHER (Kent, Thanet): I beg to give notice that on the Vote on Account I shall call the attention of the House to the continued neglect of Her Majesty's Government to carry into effect the unanimous resolution arrived at by the Royal Commission upon Telegraphic Communications with Lighthouses and Lightships, in December last, and the great risk thereby incurred and loss of life at sea.

**ADMINISTRATION OF IRISH AFFAIRS.**

MR. T. W. RUSSELL (Tyrone, S.): I beg to give notice that on the Vote on Account I shall move to reduce the sum by the amount of the Chief Secretary's salary, in order to call attention to the administration of Irish affairs by the right hon. Gentleman, his action in excess of the law, and his acquiescence in a system whereby lawbreakers and criminals have escaped justice.

VOL. IX. [FOURTH SERIES.]

**CIVIL SERVICE ESTABLISHMENT.**

MR. HANBURY (Preston): I beg to give notice on the Vote on Account to call attention to the continued neglect to carry out the recommendations of the recent Royal Commission with regard to the Civil Establishment, both upper and lower, of the Civil Service, and move to reduce the Vote.

**LAW OFFICERS OF THE CROWN.**

MR. POWELL WILLIAMS (Birmingham, S.): I beg to give notice that on the Vote for Clerical Assistance to the Law Officers of the Crown I shall move to reduce the Vote by the sum of £1,000.

**QUESTIONS.****THE SELECT COMMITTEE ON FORESTRY.**

MR. PARKER SMITH (for Sir J. LUBBOCK, London University): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Agriculture whether he proposes to take any, and, if so, what, steps to carry out the recommendations of the Select Committee on Forestry?

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF AGRICULTURE (MR. GARDNER, Essex, Saffron Walden): When the right hon. Baronet addressed a similar question to my Predecessor, he was good enough to give him nearly a week's notice. I should be much obliged if he would extend the same indulgence to myself.

**THE DISCUSSION OF THE ARMY ESTIMATES.**

LORD GEORGE HAMILTON (Middlesex, Ealing): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War if there is any precedent known of the first Vote on Army Estimates being discussed on a Saturday?

\*THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN, Stirling, &c.): This is the first of 12 questions addressed to me appearing on the Paper for the first time this morning. Many of these questions, including this, are such that some inquiry has to be made in order to make an accurate reply, and to offer any other reply would be disrespectful to the hon. Member putting the question, and to the House. I must ask the noble Lord to postpone his question.

\***LORD GEORGE HAMILTON** : Mr. Speaker, the right hon. Gentleman being unable to deny my allegation—

\***MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN** : The noble Lord is not entitled to say either that I am not able to deny his allegation, or that he has made any allegation at all. He has only asked a question.

\***LORD GEORGE HAMILTON** : I wish, Sir, to put this further question to Her Majesty's Government. The right hon. Gentleman being unable to deny my allegations as to the course adopted by Her Majesty's Government so far as the Military and Naval Services are concerned is without precedent. I wish to ask the right hon. Gentleman whether the Government were aware of that fact when they gave notice of the Motion for to-day's Sitting?

\***MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN** : I must ask the noble Lord to postpone that question also.

**MR. A. J. BALFOUR** (Manchester, E.) : Are we really to understand that the right hon. Gentleman has lent himself to this arrangement of Business without having gone through the elementary preparation required?

[No answer was given.]

#### THE NAVY ESTIMATES.

**LORD GEORGE HAMILTON** : I beg to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty if there is any precedent known of the first Vote in Naval Estimates being discussed on a Saturday?

\***THE SECRETARY TO THE ADMIRALTY** (Sir U. KAY-SHUTTLEWORTH, Lancashire, Clitheroe) : There has been no time. The noble Lord has given me no notice of this question. I saw it for the first time at half-past 10 this morning. But I can tell the noble Lord of one thing for which there was no precedent in his time. When the noble Lord got his Vote for men he got his Vote for money too.

**CAPTAIN NAYLOR LEYLAND** (Colchester) : I wish to ask the right hon. Gentleman whether he will be able to dismiss the Estimates at all to-day?

**MR. SPEAKER** : Order, order!

#### APPOINTMENTS FOR TELEGRAPH MESSENGERS.

**SIR JAMES FERGUSON** (Manchester, N.E.) : I beg to ask the Postmaster General whether he has considered the propriety of offering appointments as telegraph messengers to meritorious members of the Royal Military School, Chelsea?

**THE POSTMASTER GENERAL** (Mr. A. MORLEY, Nottingham, E.) : The suggestion contained in the question, and which was mentioned to me the other day by my right hon. Friend, is well worthy of consideration, and, together with other subjects connected with the employment of telegraph messengers, is now receiving attention.

#### SOLDIERS IN CIVIL EMPLOYMENT.

**SIR JAMES FERGUSON** : I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether any Reports have been received from the military attachés of Her Majesty's Embassies abroad as to the employment of soldiers in the Civil Departments of the State; and whether he will lay such Reports upon the Table of the House?

\***THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS** (Sir E. GREY, Northumberland, Berwick) : The answer is, Yes.

**SIR JAMES FERGUSON** : I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether a Treasury Committee has been appointed to consider what posts under Government Departments can be given to Reserve and pensioned soldiers; and, if so, whether such Committee has yet reported; and what Government Departments have offered appointments preferentially to soldiers?

\***THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY** (Sir J. T. HIBBERT, Oldham) : A Committee has not sat upon the general question, but there has been a Committee on the subject of Messengers, &c. If the right hon. Baronet desires information about this Committee I hope the question will be postponed until Monday.

#### THE LAW OFFICERS OF THE CROWN

**MR. POWELL WILLIAMS** : I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether the Law Officers of the Crown, under the new Regulations applying to

their office, are allowed to take Chamber practice for private clients?

\*THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Sir C. RUSSELL, Hackney, S.): My right hon. Friend has asked me to answer this question. I presume the hon. Member refers to the advice given to clients as opinions. The Rules do not prohibit that in express terms, but undoubtedly the spirit of the Rules does prohibit advice to clients if that interferes with the efficiency of the Law Officers in their attention to Public Business.

MR. POWELL WILLIAMS: I beg to ask for a distinct answer to the question, whether or not the Law Officers intend to undertake private Chamber practice?

\*SIR C. RUSSELL: So far as I am concerned, I do not. I cannot speak for my colleague.

MR. HANBURY: What is meant by "private" clients? Will the Attorney General explain what he really means by Chamber practice for private clients?

SIR C. RUSSELL: I must ask for notice of any further questions.

#### GREENWICH AGE PENSIONS.

\*SIR ELLIS ASHMEAD-BARTLETT (Sheffield, Ecclesall): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty whether it is the intention of the Government to carry into effect the recommendation of the Select Committee of the House of Commons on Greenwich Age Pensions (1892)?

SIR U. KAY-SHUTTLEWORTH: No, Sir. I cannot answer this question without notice. I must ask that it be put down for next Thursday.

SIR E. ASHMEAD-BARTLETT: But the subject has been before the right hon. Gentleman for some time.

#### GROCCERS' LICENCES IN SCOTLAND.

MR. TAYLOR (Norfolk, S.): I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland whether all grocers and off-licence holders in Scotland hold Justices' licences, and, as such, will come under the terms of the Local Veto Act?

THE SECRETARY FOR SCOTLAND (Sir G. TREVELYAN, Glasgow, Bridgeton): Those grocers and provision dealers who wish to trade in exciseable liquors require Justices' licences in Scotland.

#### SILVER COIN FOR THE WEST INDIES.

MR. BRODIE HOARE (Hampstead): I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer when he expects to have a sufficient quantity of silver coin to supply the wants of the West India Colonies, in some of which it is urgently needed?

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Sir W. HARCOURT, Derby): I have not had long to consider my answer to this question, but I have done my best. I have got an answer through the telephone. This is it—

"The colonial banks act as agents for the distribution of coin, and they have been supplied with the whole amount for which they have applied."

MR. E. B. HOARE: I think the right hon. Gentleman has been misinformed.

SIR W. HARCOURT: I have done my best to obtain accurate information.

#### THE EVICTED TENANTS COMMISSION.

MR. T. W. RUSSELL (Tyrone, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether, before the discussion on the Evicted Tenants Commission is taken on Monday, the Report of the Commissioners, with or without the Evidence, will be in the hands of Members?

\*THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. J. MORLEY, Newcastle-upon-Tyne): The Secretary of the Evicted Tenants Commission states that every effort has been used to complete the printing both of the Report and of the Evidence. The work is being done in Dublin, and that causes some delay. The printers have undertaken to forward copies of the Report for distribution to Members to-night, and the Minutes of Evidence will follow as soon as possible. I can only add that if the Report should not be in the hands of hon. Members by Monday morning, the Government will not feel justified in proceeding with the Debate.

MR. PENROSE FITZGERALD (Cambridge): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury if he will explain how it is that although the Report of the Evicted Tenants Commission was placed upon the Table of both Houses of Parliament on Thursday, 9th March, and appeared in the Press on the morning of Friday, 10th March, there was

not a single copy to be obtained in the Vote Office up to 10.30 p.m. yesterday for the use of Members of this House?

\*MR. J. MORLEY: A copy of the Report and of the Evidence was presented by me to the House on Thursday evening. It lay in the Office, and was, I believe, seen by several hon. Members, and a *précis* of the Report, because the whole Report had not appeared, must have been obtained, rightly or wrongly, by some Member who had access to it.

MR. PENROSE FITZGERALD: Arising out of that, may I ask whether substantially the account that has appeared in the Press is a true and correct account of the Report of the Commission?

\*MR. J. MORLEY: I have not examined minutely the *précis* of the report in the Press, but I gather that the portion of the report containing the recommendations of the Commissioners is correct.

#### COURTS MARTIAL ON ROYAL MARINES.

COLONEL LOYD (Chatham): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty if it is a fact that when the Royal Marines are at sea their officers are not allowed to sit on Courts Martial for the trial of their own men; and, if so, would he explain on what grounds?

\*SIR U. KAY-SHUTTLEWORTH: The hon. and gallant Member was good enough to write me a letter on this subject, and it has been referred to the proper quarter in the Admiralty, whose opinion has not yet reached me.

VISCOUNT CRANBORNE: When does the right hon. Gentleman think it probable he will be able to answer the question?

\*SIR U. KAY-SHUTTLEWORTH: I expect the information every moment.

#### CUBAN IMPORT DUTIES.

MR. ALBAN GIBBS (London): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether English rails are subject to a duty of 20 per cent. in Cuba, though American rails are admitted free of duty; and whether the Government are in negotiations with Spain to put an end to this state of things?

SIR E. GREY: I cannot guarantee the accuracy of the statement in the question, but I have no doubt the hon. Member puts the fact as it exists. The

Governments on both sides have expressed their willingness to enter into negotiations for a Commercial Treaty, and the question of Differential Duties will occupy their serious attention.

#### THE BAGOT STREET WORKS, BIRMINGHAM.

MR. JESSE COLLINGS (Birmingham, Bordesley): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War if there is any department of the Enfield Factory corresponding with the Bagot Street Works, Birmingham? As the matter will be referred to in the forthcoming Debate, perhaps the right hon. Gentleman can answer the question now?

\*MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: I do not quite understand what the right hon. Gentleman means. If he will kindly put his question down for Monday in a somewhat more explicit form I shall be happy to answer it.

MR. JESSE COLLINGS: I am sorry to have had to put it down for to-day. It was my intention to put it down for Monday, thinking the Debate would come on then or later. The terms in which I have put the question are understood by the officials connected with the factory.

\*MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: I have consulted the officials, and they do not understand the question.

MR. JESSE COLLINGS: I am sorry to trouble the right hon. Gentleman, but an answer is absolutely necessary for the purposes of this Debate. Bagot Street is a repairing shop, and the question is whether there is a corresponding works at the Royal Small Arms Factory at Enfield?

\*MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: I can give a rough and ready answer to that inquiry; Bagot Street is mainly, if not entirely, a repairing factory. There may be some repairing work done at Enfield, but I do not understand that there is any repairing branch there in the sense that Bagot Street is a repairing branch.

MR. E. STANHOPE (Lincolnshire, Horncastle): Is not the difference that the charge for the Enfield Factory is borne on the Ordnance Vote, while that for Bagot Street is borne on the Store Vote?

MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: That is not the question on the Paper. I do not imagine the right hon. Gentle-

man cares which Vote bears the charge. All he asked was whether or not there was at Enfield a department corresponding with the Bagot Street works. I have answered that.

#### THE NILE VALLEY RAILWAY.

**SIR WILLIAM MARRIOTT** (Brighton): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether Her Majesty's Government have any information of the intention of the Egyptian authorities to extend the railway up the Nile Valley towards the Egyptian frontier, and if any correspondence has passed between the two Governments upon the subject; and, if so, whether there is any objection to laying such Correspondence upon the Table of the House?

\***SIR E. GREY**: I have sent for information, but it has not reached me, so I think it would be desirable to defer the question till Monday.

#### LEAD PENCILS FOR THE PUBLIC SERVICE.

**Mr. JAMES WILLIAM LOWTHER** (Cumberland, Penrith): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury what is the number of lead pencils annually supplied to the various Public Departments of the State; what proportion of such pencils is derived from Home and what from Foreign manufactories; what are the average prices of the Home-made and Foreign-made pencils, respectively; and are the Foreign-made pencils superior in quality to those of Home manufacture?

**SIR J. T. HIBBERT**: The right hon. Gentleman will readily see I have had no time to get this detailed information as to lead pencils.

**SIR J. GORST** (Cambridge University): But surely it could have been obtained from the Stationery Office?

**SIR J. T. HIBBERT**: I have endeavoured to obtain it there; but as the right hon. Gentleman knows, it is not easy to get such information at a moment's notice.

#### NITRO-GLYCERINE.

**Mr. COCHRANE** (Ayrshire, N.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether he is aware that the only factory of nitro-glycerine in Scotland (the chief ingredient in cordite gunpowder) is

located at Ardeer in Ayrshire, and is conducted by the Nobels Explosives Company, Limited; that General Noble, the late Superintendent of the Royal Gunpowder Factory at Waltham Abbey, by local advertisement and personal interview, induced some of the most experienced workmen employed in Nobels factory, and who were acquainted with the secret processes connected with the manufacture of nitro-glycerine, to leave their employment and take service in the Government factory; and whether this method of obtaining skilled workmen and information to enable the War Office to compete with private traders is in accordance with the Rules and usual practice of the War Department?

\***MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN**: I must ask the hon. Member to postpone this question. I have to remind him that litigation is pending between the War Department and this Company, and while that is going on it is undesirable that any question as to it should be put or answered in this House.

**Mr. COCHRANE**: Will the right hon. Gentleman get the litigation pushed forward as rapidly as possible?

**MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN**: We are doing so as much as we can.

#### HOODED VANS IN LONDON.

**Mr. PARKER SMITH**: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he can state the number of accidents caused by hooded vans in London during the year; whether vans, in which the driver is entirely surrounded on three sides, are permitted in any other city in the country; and whether he will take measures to insure that proper precautions are insisted on by which, in all vehicles plying the streets, the driver shall be able to have a sufficient view at the sides to prevent danger of collision with other vehicles or of running over foot passengers?

**THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT** (Mr. ASQUITH, Fife, E.): With reference to the first and second paragraphs of the hon. Member's question, I am unable to give an answer, but am in communication with the Commissioner of Police. With reference to the third paragraph, the police have no power to enforce regula-



tions requiring the driver of a van to be seated on any particular part of it, or that the van should be furnished with windows.

#### THE MEMBERS' LOBBY.

**MR. PARKER SMITH** : I beg to ask the First Commissioner of Works whether he is prepared to have the paint cleared off from the stonework in the Members' Lobby, and to restore the mason work as it was before the time when Mr. Ayrton was First Commissioner of Works?

**THE FIRST COMMISSIONER OF WORKS** (Mr. SHAW LEFEVRE, Bradford, Central) : I am not prepared to recommend a waste of the public money in the manner suggested by the hon. Member.

#### THE NEW LABOUR CORRESPONDENT.

**MR. J. CHAMBERLAIN** (Birmingham, W.) : I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade what arrangements were made by him to secure the appointment of competent and impartial persons as Labour Correspondents in connection with the new Labour Bureau ; and if he will state the politics of the gentlemen already appointed to these posts ?

**MR. DALZIEL** (Kirkcaldy, &c.) : Before the right hon. Gentleman answers the question, I wish to ask whether the right hon. Gentleman, if he took politics into consideration, made any distinction between Liberal Unionists and Conservatives ?

**MR. MUNDELLA** : Three new Labour Correspondents have been appointed in connection with the Labour Department. One of these is a lady. Before appointing these officers I made careful inquiries into their fitness for discharging the duties intrusted to them, but my inquiries did not extend to their political opinions. I have heard it stated, however, that one of them is a life-long Member of the Conservative Party.

**MR. J. COLLINGS** : May I ask if the right hon. Gentleman will inquire whether one or more of these gentlemen were not distinguished as notorious partizans during the General Election, in consequence of their uncompromising support of the agitation in favour of separation ?

*Mr. Asquith*

**MR. MUNDELLA** : Surely I ought to have notice of a question like that. The right hon. Gentleman does not seem to distinguish between the Labour Correspondents of the Board of Trade and gentlemen who as local correspondents contributed information to *The Labour Gazette*.

**MR. J. CHAMBERLAIN** : Are these gentlemen whom the right hon. Gentleman calls Local Correspondents paid by the State ?

**MR. MUNDELLA** : Yes, I answered that question yesterday. They are paid small sums of from £10 to £20 a year according to the services that they are required to render in their separate localities.

**MR. J. CHAMBERLAIN** : Can the right hon. Gentleman answer this question now, or shall I put it on another day ? Will he furnish the same information with respect to these local correspondents that he has given with regard to the Labour Correspondents ?

**MR. MUNDELLA** : My answer is that arrangements have been made with certain gentlemen in labour centres in the United Kingdom to supply information on matters affecting labour questions in their various districts. The politics of these gentlemen have not been inquired into in any single instance.

**MR. J. CHAMBERLAIN** : I beg, then, to ask, is the right hon. Gentleman aware that in 1883, when the Board of Trade made a great number of appointments of the same kind, the whole matter was referred to a small Committee of permanent officials, so that there should be no suspicion of Party bias ? Has the same course been followed in this case ?

**MR. MUNDELLA** : No single appointment has been made except on the recommendation of the permanent officials, and Mr. John Burnett has taken the pains to go down to the districts where he has been in doubt, and to select the best man for the appointment. I have not appointed a single person except on the recommendation of the permanent officials, and I have not inquired into the politics of those appointed.

**MR. JAMES LOWTHER** : Will the right hon. Gentleman say who were the permanent officials whom he consulted ?

**MR. MUNDELLA** : No, Sir. I take all responsibility for them upon myself.

**MR. STUART-WORTLEY** (Sheffield, Hallam): May I ask whether, besides the small sums paid to the local correspondents, any allowance is made for travelling or other expenses?

**MR. MUNDELLA**: If they are called upon to travel—a question which has not yet arisen—of course their expenses will be paid. But the object is that these local Labour Correspondents shall supply information as to labour questions in their own districts.

**MR. FORWOOD** (Lancashire, Ormskirk): Will any portion of the cost of these Correspondents appear on the Supplementary Estimates?

**MR. MUNDELLA**: Certainly not. The appointments do not take effect till the 1st of April.

#### THE HOWE COURT MARTIAL.

**SIR JOHN GORST** (Cambridge University): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury when the Papers relating to the Courts Martial on the stranding of *H.M.S. Howe*, which have been ordered by the House to be printed, will be distributed to Members?

**SIR J. T. HIBBERT**: I have endeavoured to obtain the information, and am sorry to be unable to get a day named. I am afraid several days will elapse before the distribution of the Papers can take place.

**MR. T. G. BOWLES** (Lynn Regis): May I ask whether the Government will postpone the consideration of that portion of the Navy Estimates upon which we can raise the question of the *Howe* Court Martial till the Papers have been distributed?

\***SIR U. KAY-SHUTTLEWORTH**: There is not the slightest intention to take the Martial Law Vote till the Papers are in the hands of hon. Members.

#### WAGES IN GOVERNMENT ESTABLISHMENTS.

**SIR JOHN GORST**: I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether the Government intend to submit a Supplementary Estimate to enable them to carry out the Resolution of the House of the 6th inst. relative to the wages of the workmen in Government establishments?

**SIR J. T. HIBBERT**: The Resolution refers to naval establishments, and no proposal has yet been submitted by that Department to the Treasury.

**SIR J. GORST**: While the Motion refers to naval establishments, the Secretary of State for War referred to Government establishments generally, and I wish to know whether a Supplementary Estimate will be presented to carry out the recommendations?

**SIR W. HARCOURT**: No; certainly not.

**SIR J. GORST**: Do I understand the Chancellor of the Exchequer to say that no effort will be made by the Government to give effect to the declaration of the Secretary of State for War?

**SIR W. HARCOURT**: I did not say that. I said no Supplementary Estimate would be laid on the Table.

#### AUSTRALIAN COALING STATIONS.

**SIR RICHARD TEMPLE** (Surrey, Kingston): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether he can state the condition of the Australian coaling stations at Thursday Island and St. George's Sound in respect of fortification and armament?

\***MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN**: I think the hon. and gallant Member must see that an hour and a-half's notice is hardly long enough to enable me to get this information.

#### THE EMPLOYMENT OF DISCHARGED SOLDIERS.

**CAPTAIN BAGOT** (Westmoreland, Kendal): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether he will take any steps that the recommendations of Mr. Childers' Committee of 1876-7, as to the employment of discharged soldiers, sailors, and Marines in various civil posts under Government, may be more thoroughly carried into effect?

**MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN**: Steps have been taken, and will continue to be taken, to carry out these recommendations. For clerical duties under Government, a Civil Service certificate of education is required. Such appointments are open to soldiers if they qualify for them. But as to all such appointments as messengers, office keepers, &c., I can only say, speaking for my Department, that for many years none but former soldiers have been appointed.

**THE LIQUOR TRAFFIC (LOCAL VETO) BILL.**

**SIR ELLIS ASHMEAD-BARTLETT** : I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer on what date he proposes to take the Second Reading of the Liquor Traffic (Local Control) Bill?

**SIR W. HARCOURT** : I am at present unable to fix any day.

**RYE CATTLE MARKET.**

**MR. BROOKFIELD** (Sussex, Rye) : I beg to ask the President of the Board of Agriculture if he has received a Memorial from the Rye Cattle Market Company, asking that their licence to hold the usual fortnightly market on Wednesday, the 22nd instant, may be renewed; whether the measures recently taken to cope with the outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease at Guestling have proved effectual; and whether he can hold out any hope that the Board of Agriculture will be able to grant the request of the Rye Cattle Market Company, and renew their licence within a measurable period of time?

**MR. GARDNER** : I have received the Memorial to which the hon. Member refers. There is good reason to hope that the measures we have taken to cope with the outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease at Guestling will prove effectual, and that we may be able to relax the existing restrictions before very long.

**DUBLIN RATE COLLECTION DEPARTMENT.**

**MR. WILLIAM KENNY** (Dublin, St. Stephen's Green) : I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether his attention has been called to the case of Mr. R. M. Richardson, an officer receiving £120 a year with a bonus of £10 in the Department of the Collector General of Rates in Dublin, who has been retired after 14 years' service, at 10 days' notice, on a superannuation allowance of £6 10s. under "The Dublin Corporation Act, 1890," while of seven officers retired under the Act five were awarded two-thirds of their salaries as retiring allowances; and if he will state on what grounds Mr. Richardson was awarded only 1-20th of his salary and bonus; and whether he will re-consider Mr. Richard-

son's claim, with the view of granting him a more equitable retiring allowance?

**\*MR. J. MORLEY** : This question is so full of minute detail that I must ask for further notice.

**SLAVERY ON THE MADAGASCAR COAST.**

**SIR THOMAS LEA** (Londonderry, S.) : I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether the French Government have given any special undertaking for dealing with the Slave Trade on the coast of Madagascar, in lieu of the right of search which until now the British Government has been understood to possess, and which it has now given up?

**\*SIR E. GREY** : The right of search has been given up by this country because the protectorate of France over Madagascar is recognised by Her Majesty's Government. France gave an undertaking that she would be responsible for dealing with the Slave Trade in her territorial waters.

**MEATH TRIALS.**

**SIR THOMAS LEA** : I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland if the Attorney General directed a number of Party riot and assault cases from the County of Meath to be tried at the recent Londonderry Sessions, taking up a considerable time, and of a very serious character; and if such action is not contrary to all precedent and practice?

**\*MR. J. MORLEY** : My hon. Friend has been obviously misinformed. It is quite impossible that cases from Meath County should be tried at Londonderry Sessions. I may remind the hon. Gentleman that the Judge at the Meath Assizes expressed himself well satisfied with the verdicts of the juries both convicting and acquitting.

**THE YEOMANRY CAVALRY.**

**CAPTAIN BAGOT** : I beg to ask the Secretary for War whether, having regard to the hardship that has arisen in some cases, troop sergeant majors of Yeomanry who have qualified for pension by being compelled, under the new Regulations, to give up their appointments at short notice, he will recommend commanding officers of Yeomanry to give such sergeant majors at least three months' notice before they are retired, in order that they may have an

opportunity of obtaining civil employment?

\*MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: I must ask that this question be postponed.

#### THE BEHRING SEA ARBITRATION.

MR. GIBSON BOWLES: I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury how many counsel are engaged on behalf of Her Majesty's Government in the Behring Sea Arbitration; and whether they are to receive any, and, if so, what, remuneration for their services at that Arbitration?

SIR J. T. HIBBERT: This question should be addressed to the Foreign Office.

MR. GIBSON BOWLES: Then I put it to the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.

\*SIR E. GREY: There are four counsel engaged. They will receive remuneration, but the exact amount is now a subject of correspondence.

MR. GIBSON BOWLES: Will the hon. Gentleman tell me who the counsel are?

\*SIR E. GREY: The late Attorney General, the present Attorney General, Mr. Box, and Mr. Robinson.

#### THE LIGHT ON THE CLOCK TOWER.

MR. SIDNEY HERBERT (Croydon): I beg to ask the First Commissioner of Works whether his attention has been called to the column of electric light which is flashed from a theatre in Shaftesbury Avenue; and whether he will consider the desirability of placing a similar light on the Clock Tower of the Houses of Parliament in the place of the inefficient gas light now in use there?

MR. SHAW LEFEVRE: The new signal gas light recently placed at the top of the Clock Tower is at present incomplete, and cannot be perfected till the Easter Recess. The desirability of substituting a flash electric light has not, so far, been considered, and the propriety of making such a change is, I think, very doubtful.

#### THE YEOMANRY.

MR. DIGBY (Dorset, N.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether he will consider the advisability

of making it optional on the part of officers commanding Yeomanry regiments to retain or dispense with the non-commissioned officers of the present permanent staff who may be surplus to the new establishment?

\*MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: As to all these questions respecting the Yeomanry force I have not had time to get information, and I shall be obliged if hon. Members will postpone them.

\*MR. WALTER LONG (Liverpool, West Derby): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether he will grant a year's grace to Yeomanry regiments whose strength has been fixed at three squadrons, in order that their Commanding Officer may have a fair chance of raising his regiment to four squadrons. If the right hon. Gentleman cannot answer these questions now, will he tell us when he would like them put down?

\*MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: I should think the proper time to raise these questions will be on the Yeomanry Vote.

\*MR. LONG: As to that, we can judge for ourselves. I want to know when he will be prepared to answer the questions?

\*MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: Oh, in a few days I will answer them, so far as the information in my possession allows it.

#### TROWBRIDGE BARRACKS.

\*MR. WALTER LONG: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether it is his intention not to send another battery of Artillery to Trowbridge when the one now there leaves?

\*MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: I understand that the Military Authorities are strongly opposed to the maintenance of single batteries in isolated quarters, and there is consequently no intention to send another battery to Trowbridge.

\*MR. LONG: Is it not the case a large amount of money has been spent on these barracks? Is it proposed to make any use of them, or will the Local Authorities be invited to offer suggestions as to their use?

\*MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN : Perhaps the hon. Member will ask the late Secretary for War as to the amount of money spent on the barracks. If he puts his question on the Paper, I will answer him on Monday.

#### NAVAL ENGINEERS.

MR. TAYLOR (Norfolk, S.) : I beg to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty why chief, staff, and fleet engineers, who, according to the official *Navy List* of January, 1893, were entitled to the option of retiring at the age of 50, are now compulsorily retained, serving for five years longer; and whether in consideration of five years' compulsory additional service their rates of pay and retirement may be made, at least, equivalent to those accorded to medical and accountant officers?

\*SIR U. KAY-SHUTTLEWORTH : The optional retirement of engineers at the age of 50 years has been suspended. The Regulations do not admit of the payment of more than the maximum rates of pay.

MR. TAYLOR : I shall raise this question on the Estimates.

#### THE GUARDS.

MR. HOZIER (Lanark, S.) : I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether a battalion of the Guards is to be sent to Egypt; and, if so, whether he will state the approximate date?

\*MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN : No positive decision has been come to.

#### ROYAL ARTILLERY GUNS.

\*MR. ARNOLD-FORSTER (Belfast, W.) : I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether there are at this moment upwards of 200 muzzle-loading 9-pounder guns in the hands of the Royal Artillery in India; whether these guns are of an obsolete pattern condemned for many years; and how soon a modern breechloading gun could be supplied to the whole of the Royal Artillery in India, provided that immediate orders were given to all establishments in the country capable of manufacturing them?

\*MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN : I must ask the hon. Gentleman to postpone his question.

MR. ARNOLD-FORSTER : Cannot the right hon. Gentleman answer the first two paragraphs?

MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN : I saw the whole question could not be answered. I am not able to pick and choose between parts of a question, so it had better be put off.

MR. ARNOLD-FORSTER : But surely the right hon. Gentleman is in possession of information as to the two first paragraphs.

MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN : I have a considerable knowledge myself of the subject on which the question is put, but I should prefer to be perfectly accurate before I answer.

MR. ARNOLD-FORSTER : In consequence of the answer of the right hon. Gentleman I shall in Committee of Supply move the reduction of the Vote for the Royal Artillery.

VISCOUNT CRANBORNE (Colchester) : How does the right hon. Gentleman expect us to be able to discuss the Army Estimates without consideration, when he himself is not able to answer the most elementary questions?

MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN : I did not say I was not able to answer elementary questions. I said I declined to answer questions of this sort without being certain of the accuracy of my answer.

#### SCOTCH CROFTERS FOR BRITISH COLUMBIA.

MR. RANKIN (Herefordshire, Leominster) : I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland whether any emigration of Scotch crofters is now taking place from the Highlands to British Columbia; and how far the loan made for that purpose to the Columbian Government has been expended?

SIR G. TREVELYAN : The arrangements made by the late Government were to the effect that a loan was sanctioned to the British Columbian Government to assist the emigration of Scotch crofters. The British Columbian Government, under a Statute, propose to conduct that emigration through the

agency of a company which has not yet been formed. The loan has, therefore not been made, and still less expended.

#### THE EVICTED TENANTS COMMISSION.

MR. DUNBAR BARTON (Armagh, Mid): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland what was the rate of daily remuneration for Commissioners and witnesses respectively (including travelling and sundry expenses) in connection with the Evicted Tenants Commission; and whether any remuneration was given in the form of costs or otherwise to the legal representatives of any of the parties who appeared before the Commission; and, if so, what were the particulars of such remuneration?

\*MR. J. MORLEY: Mr. Justice Mathew received, in accordance with precedent, the sum of two guineas a night for subsistence allowance and actual travelling expenses. Mr. Roche, Q.C., received remuneration also, in conformity with precedent, in the cases of practising Queen's Counsel engaged in Government inquiries, at the rate of 10 guineas a day for the first 28 days, and five guineas a day for each subsequent day, and also travelling expenses and subsistence allowance of one guinea a night when absent from Dublin. Mr. Redington received no fee, but received the ordinary subsistence allowance of one guinea a night while away from his home, and personal travelling expenses. Witnesses received travelling and subsistence allowances at the established rate dependent upon their profession and station in life. In the case of one solicitor who saved the Commission much time and expense, the Treasury acceded to the request of the Commissioners in granting that a special gratuity should be paid to him of £50, and one similar case is under the consideration of the Treasury at present.

\*MR. BARTLEY (Islington, N.): Are these items provided for in the Supplementary Estimate which we are to discuss on Monday?

MR. J. MORLEY: Yes, Sir.

#### THE NEW MAGAZINE RIFLE.

MR. A. CHAMBERLAIN (Worcestershire, E.): In the absence of the hon. Member for the Wellington Division of

Shropshire, I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War when he hopes to begin the distribution of the new rifle to the Militia and Volunteer Forces, in place of the obsolete weapons now in use?

\*MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: It is impossible to say at the present moment when the distribution of the new rifle will be made. It is necessary, first, to put it in the hands of the Army, and to create a sufficient reserve for the Army. I must take exception to the word "obsolete" being used in regard to the Martini-Henry. Though its place is to be taken by a new weapon, it is not obsolete.

#### SALMON FISHING IN SCOTCH RIVERS.

MR. THORBURN (Peebles and Selkirk): I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland whether he can give any information as to the intentions of the Government as regards the introduction of a general measure dealing with salmon fishing in Scotch rivers?

SIR G. TREVELYAN: I have several times given an answer on this question, to the effect that, when the Deep Sea Fishery Bill now before the House is disposed of, the Government will approach the question of legislation about salmon, especially with regard to the Tweed and the Solway.

MR. THORBURN: I was not aware that the question had been answered before.

#### THE HAWAIIAN ISLANDS.

SIR R. TEMPLE: In the absence of the hon. Member for the Kirkdale Division of Liverpool, I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether he can state that the United States have now definitely disclaimed any intention of annexing the Hawaiian Islands, or of extending a protectorate over them; and whether he can lay upon the Table any further Correspondence dealing with this matter?

\*SIR E. GREY: The hon. Member will have seen that the Treaty of Annexion has been withdrawn from the American Congress. They have made no communication to us of their intention of annexing the islands. I can, therefore, make no statement about it. Without being given an opportunity of referring to Correspondence I cannot make any statement as to its publication.

## FOREIGN MEAT.

MR. YERBURGH (Chester): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether, in view of the great importance attached by the agricultural interest to the labelling of foreign and colonial meat and of the improbability, in the congested state of Public Business, of the Bills dealing with this question being considered by the House, he will grant a Select Committee to inquire into the subject?

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. W. E. GLADSTONE, Edinburgh, Midlothian): I think this subject is included within the scope of the Reference to the Committee, which is to deal with agricultural questions, and the Government have, therefore, no intention of holding a separate inquiry.

## ARMED VOLUNTEERS IN IRELAND.

SIR ELLIS ASHMEAD-BARTLETT: I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether it is the intention of the Government to allow the establishment of an armed Volunteer Force in Ireland? Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that the establishment of an Irish Volunteer Force was expressly provided against in the Bill of 1886? Why is it not forbidden in the present Home Rule Bill?

MR. W. E. GLADSTONE: I shall be better able to answer the question when we come to the discussion of the Home Rule Bill. There is no Volunteer Force in Ireland, and I know of no proposal for establishing one. Her Majesty's Government have not had the subject under consideration.

\*SIR E. ASHMEAD-BARTLETT: Do I understand that the right hon. Gentleman declines to say now whether the words in the Bill which refer to the Naval and Military Forces include or exclude a Volunteer Force? It would be a great convenience to us to be told that.

[No answer was given.]

## UGANDA.

SIR R. TEMPLE (Surrey, Kilgston): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether he will fix a day for taking the Supplementary Estimate for the service in Uganda?

MR. W. E. GLADSTONE: We have no intention whatever of fixing the discussion of the Supplementary Estimate for the service in Uganda for a particular day.

## PEERS AND POLITICS.

MR. THOMAS SHAW (Hawick, &c.): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether his attention has been called to a statement in *The Aberdeen Free Press* of Friday, 10th March, 1893, from which it appears that a telegram was recently sent by Lord Mount Stephen asking his Unionist friends in Dufftown to support the Unionist candidate at the approaching election; and whether, in view of the Rule of this House, with reference to the interference of Peers in Parliamentary elections, the Government propose to take any action with reference to the subject?

MR. W. E. GLADSTONE: This case has only been brought under my notice by the question of my hon. Friend. I will not now enter into any discussion as to the Resolution of the House relating to the subject of the interference of Peers at elections. This is a case of alleged interference by a Peer opposed in politics to Her Majesty's Government, and I do not think it would be wise for Her Majesty's Government to entertain the question of putting in force—presuming we can put it in force—a Resolution which has not been enforced for a great length of time, in the case of a gentleman opposed to them in politics of their own Motion and without any intervention on the part of the House.

## THE CHANNEL TUNNEL.

MR. HENEAGE (Great Grimsby): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether the usual notice of opposition to the Channel Tunnel has been given by the Department of the Board of Trade; and what course the Government intend to take on the Second Reading of the Channel Tunnel Bill?

MR. MUNDELLA: I have not thought it necessary to take any action in this matter. In a new Parliament I prefer to leave it to the judgment of the House.

MR. HENEAGE: I wish to ask if it is not usual for the Board of Trade as a Department to give notice to the pro-

moters of the Bill that they will be obliged to oppose it when it comes on? Has that official departmental notice been given?

**MR. MUNDELLA :** I have not thought it necessary to take any action in the matter. I shall leave it entirely to the judgment of the House.

**MR. HENEAGE :** Will it be left to private Members to move the rejection of the Bill?

[No answer was given.]

#### THE TREATY WITH JAPAN.

**MR. CURZON** (Lancashire, Southport) : I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether any proposal has been received from the Japanese Government for the re-opening of the question of Treaty revision with that country?

**SIR E. GREY :** No proposal has been received from the Japanese Government on this subject.

#### NAVAL EXPENDITURE.

**MR. FORWOOD** (Lancashire, Ormskirk) : As to the Navy Estimates, I wish to ask whether the money taken in Vote 1 for men will be available on and after April 1st for the use of the Board of Admiralty for paying wages, for materials used in the construction of the proposed new vessels, and for the general expenditure of the Admiralty?

**SIR W. HARCOURT :** I do not like answering a question of that kind off-hand; but if the hon. Member wishes to know my opinion at the moment, I rather think the money will be so available. I do not, however, wish to vouch for the accuracy of that opinion.

**MR. FORWOOD :** Then I would put the question to the Secretary to the Treasury. Will any of the money voted for men be used for the construction of new ships after April 1st?

**SIR W. HARCOURT :** I thought the hon. Member was referring to the general Vote for the Army.

**\*MR. FORWOOD :** No; the Navy.

**SIR U. KAY-SHUTTLEWORTH :** There will be no departure from the usual course.

#### SUPERANNUATION OF TEACHERS.

**SIR R. TEMPLE :** I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer a question of which I have given him private notice—namely, whether he will be kind enough to make some small financial provision for beginning the superannuation fund for elementary teachers in the manner recommended by this House?

**SIR W. HARCOURT :** I am in communication with my right hon. Friend the Vice President of the Council on the subject.

**\*MR. HOZIER :** Will the right hon. Gentleman also take into consideration the claims of the Scottish teachers in this respect?

**SIR W. HARCOURT :** I think that when England gets anything Scotland will be pretty sure to do the same.

#### IRELAND AND A VOLUNTEER FORCE.

**MR. A. J. BALFOUR :** As to an answer the Prime Minister gave to my hon. Friend the Member for Sheffield in relation to Question No. 60, might I respectfully ask him whether he could not give us the information desired, with a view to the discussions on the Home Rule Bill? As I understood his answer, he appeared to think—

**MR. W. E. GLADSTONE :** I had risen with the intention of referring to this matter when the right hon. Gentleman interrupted me. Though there has been no notice of this question, and though I have no right to fix the legal signification of words, there is no reason why I should not state the opinion of the Government. I consider that the establishment of a Volunteer Force is decidedly included within the scope of the Government of Ireland Bill.

#### THE ORDNANCE FACTORY VOTE.

**MR. HANBURY :** Can the right hon. Gentleman say when the Ordnance Factory Vote will come on? Is it usual to take money in the Army Estimates for the Ordnance Vote before that Vote has been submitted to the House?

**\*MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN :** I am not able to say what is usual. There will be no departure from the ordinary practice.



MR. HANBURY : I do not ask what is usual, but whether the right hon. Gentleman is not compelled by law to bring the Vote on before applying money to the Ordnance Factory Vote ?

MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN : If so, I shall do it.

\*MR. E. STANHOPE : Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that the Public Accounts Committee stated that the Ordnance Factory Vote ought always to be taken before the conclusion of the financial year ?

\*MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN : If that is so I shall do it. I do not mean to say that I shall necessarily follow the course recommended by the Public Accounts Committee, but the usual practice which has been followed by the right hon. Gentleman himself will be adopted in this case. There may be some recommendations of the Committee that have not been carried into effect yet.

MR. HANBURY : Has the right hon. Gentleman legal power to take money from the Army Vote for the purposes of the Ordnance Vote before that Vote is passed ?

MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN : If not, it will not be taken.

#### THE DEBATE ON THE REPORT OF THE EVICTED TENANTS COMMISSION.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR : I wish to ask either the Prime Minister or the Chief Secretary for Ireland a question as to Monday's Business in consequence of what fell from the Chief Secretary in answer to the hon. Member for South Tyrone. The hon. Member asked a question as to the time at which the Report of the Evicted Tenants Commission will be in the hands of hon. Members, and the Chief Secretary replied that he regretted that the Report was not in the hands of hon. Members now; that he hoped it would be in their hands on Monday, and that if it is not issued on Monday morning he will not ask the House to discuss the question until Monday evening. I hope, myself, that it will be in the hands of Members on Monday. There are certain questions connected with the Commission which have no relation to the Report, and I hope it will be understood that we are not to be precluded, after the pledges given by the Government, from discussing these ques-

tions, whether the Report is in the hands of Members on Monday morning or not.

MR. W. E. GLADSTONE : As it is not absolutely certain that the Report will be in the hands of Members on Monday morning, and as it is undesirable that Members should remain in uncertainty as to the Business for Monday, I think it would be convenient to the House at large to change the Business for Monday and to fix this discussion for Tuesday.

MR. J. W. LOWTHER (Cumberland, Penrith) : Then, what will be the Business for Monday ?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR : May I ask whether the right hon. Gentleman heard the answer given by the Secretary of the Treasury just now, to the effect that some of the cost of the Evicted Tenants Commission did come out of Supplementary Estimates? I think there has been some mistake about that. It appears that some of the money does come under the Supplementary Estimates, therefore we shall be entitled to discuss the Report of the Commission whenever the Supplementary Estimates come on.

MR. J. MORLEY : It would save the time of the House, and contribute to the continuity of discussion, if the criticisms of hon. Members opposite were confined to the Report and other incidents of the Commission.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR : I agree with that, but I am afraid that so large a question cannot be adequately discussed on a Tuesday afternoon.

MR. T. W. RUSSELL : A great deal of the conversation that has been taking place across the Table of the House has been quite inaudible to me and hon. Gentlemen sitting near me. I desire to know whether the Debate on the Evicted Tenants Commission is to come on on Monday or not, or in what manner it is to be discussed? I have undertaken to challenge the policy of the Evicted Tenants Commission Vote whenever and however it comes on. I have not heard a word of the conversation, and I entirely decline to be bound by any understanding that may have been come to across the Table. I have undertaken to move the rejection of the Vote, and will challenge the whole policy of the Commission. [*Cries of "Order!"*] I beg to move the adjournment of the House. [*Interruption.*]

\*MR. SPEAKER: I hope the House will keep silence and allow the hon. Member to ask a question.

MR. T. W. RUSSELL: I am sorry to have been obliged to appear to threaten by moving the adjournment of the House, but I say I have a right to put a question on a subject of great importance without interruption from hon. Members opposite. I desire, in the first place, to know whether this Vote is to be taken on Monday or not? In the second place, I wish to know, if it is not to be taken on Monday, when do the Government expect it to be taken? and, in the third place, we have heard something dropped by the Leader of the Opposition about certain expenses connected with the Commission, and I desire to know whether we are to have a fair fight on the policy of the Commission on the Vote for the Commission, or whether the subject is to be raised on the Stationery Vote, or something of that kind?

MR. W. E. GLADSTONE: As I understand it, there is no doubt at all that this discussion is to take place on the Temporary Commissions Vote. We are satisfied with that. As to the time of the discussion, my suggestion of transferring it to Tuesday does not seem to be acceptable in all quarters; therefore it will stand for Monday.

MR. JAMES LOWTHER: As to fixing the day, I would ask the right hon. Gentleman if his attention has been called to the fact that on the same Vote a question of great importance as to which I have a notice on the Paper has precedence—I mean the Labour Commission? My Motion is to reduce the item for excess expenditure on the Labour Commission. That question comes before the Vote for the Evicted Tenants Commission. Has the right hon. Gentleman this fact in his mind?

MR. W. E. GLADSTONE: We have no control over the proceedings of private Members, who think it their duty to give notice of Motions that, under the Rules of the House, would stand for discussion before the Evicted Tenants Commission. The right hon. Gentleman is in possession of his privilege, therefore the right hon. Gentleman will undergo no damage in the matter.

## ORDERS OF THE DAY.

### SUPPLY—COMMITTEE.

Order for Committee read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair."

THE CHAIRMAN of WAYS and MEANS, at the request of Mr. Speaker, took the Chair as Deputy Speaker, in pursuance of Standing Order No. 1.

MR. SPEAKER resumed the Chair.

### THE CASE OF DR. BRIGGS.

MR. LOCKWOOD (York) said, he rose in pursuance of the following notice on the Paper:—

"On Army Estimates, to call attention to the case of Dr. Briggs, and to move for a Select Committee to inquire into the refusal to reinstate him."

He said that although, as it would be observed, the case to which he wished to call the attention of his right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for War involved the position of an individual, yet he ventured to think that the course of treatment to which that individual had been subjected had made the question more than one affecting an individual—had made it, in fact, a national question. For the person whose name was connected with the notice he had given was a person who had served with very great distinction in our National Army. He took it to be a matter of national interest that persons who served the country should, at any rate, be justly treated, in connection with their service. He wished, first of all, before he proceeded, to tell the House how Dr. Briggs had been treated, to inform the House shortly what had been the nature of the services that gallant officer had rendered to the country. He entered the Army in 1875, being attached to the Medical Department. In 1877-78 he served in an expedition, not merely rendering those services which were immediately connected with his profession, but rendering services in the presence of the enemy, and he was rewarded with a medal and a clasp for that campaign. Then in 1878 and 1880 he served in the Afghan War; in 1884-85 he served with eminent distinction in the Soudan expedition, being present at more than

one engagement. His services found recognition in the Despatches, and, again, he was entitled to more decorations in connection with that campaign. After the Soudanese campaign Dr. Briggs was promoted to the rank of surgeon major, and at the time he received that promotion he was the youngest officer in that branch of Her Majesty's Service who had attained this rank. After those services, he had the misfortune—the very grave misfortune, which no one recognised more fully than he did himself—to be promoted to the Staff of the then Governor of Madras, Lord Connemara. He was promoted to be medical officer on that staff in November, 1886. Now, far be it from his (Mr. Lockwood's) wish or intention to trouble the House with the painful personal matters which arose between the Governor of Madras and Lady Connemara. Base charges were made against Surgeon Major Briggs—charges which reflected not only upon the lady whose name he had mentioned, but which reflected seriously on Dr. Briggs. Those charges were met by Dr. Briggs, and the Governor of Madras wrote and handed to this gentleman a written apology for having made them. But owing to this disagreement—to those charges—of course, it became impossible for any gentleman to remain longer connected with that establishment. Dr. Briggs returned to this country. He (Mr. Lockwood) troubled the House with these details, because it was necessary that the House should know all the facts. A suit was commenced in the Divorce Division of the High Court of Justice by Lady Connemara, in which she claimed to have the marriage tie between herself and the Governor of Madras dissolved. That petition, the House would understand, was met by counter-charges—by those very charges which had been made against Dr. Briggs in India, and for which he had in his possession a written apology. Those charges, however, were repeated in a counter petition, and Dr. Briggs found himself made a co-respondent in this cross-suit. Well, being placed in that position, of course it was necessary for him, as any Member of the House would at once recognise, to take every step, not only on his own behalf, but, of course, on behalf of the lady whose

name was so disgracefully coupled with his, to meet these charges at the earliest opportunity, and 'he (Mr. Lockwood) must for himself say this: He knew nothing whatever of Army discipline, he belonged to another profession; but he must say this: that he should have thought that it would have been not in the ranks of the Army, but in the higher officialdom of his own profession, that Dr. Briggs would have found the readiest support and sympathy. He should have thought that the mere telling of his tale would have insured for him every facility for meeting the charges. If the charges were true let him suffer for them, but if they were false let him rebut them and destroy them. He regretted to say that, so far from that sympathy being extended to that gallant gentleman—and he said this with deliberation as knowing something of the case—so far from facilities being offered, Dr. Briggs was sorely hampered in the matter. When he returned to this country he made application, because his health had suffered considerably in consequence of the mental anxiety through which he had passed, to be relieved for a time from the performance of his duty. After some time he was accorded sick leave; but he found to his dismay that, while it had become necessary for him to be in immediate communication with the persons who were to defend him against the charges, he was ordered to a remote station in Ireland. He interviewed the Director General of the Army Medical Department, and, much against his will, went into these delicate private matters; he stated to the head of the Department fully and frankly and fairly what his position was. After those representations he was sent to Woolwich. During the time he was there he had, of course, every opportunity—the opportunity he desired—of consulting with his legal advisers. But what was his astonishment, and what was his dismay to find that, when the case was actually pending and about to come on for trial, he was ordered to India? Now, it was to be hoped that, whoever dealt with the case from an official point of view in the House, would be able to give some explanation as to how it came about that this gentleman, who had fully informed the Department as to the painful nature of his position—who had told his

sad story to the Director General of the Medical Department—should, at this time, when, above all things, it was necessary that he should remain in England to meet the charges, have been ordered out to India. Dr. Briggs, when he received this order, went again to the heads of his expostulating, and he said, as every man of Department honour would do, "It is not only a question of my own honour—the honour of this woman is at stake." He was coolly reminded that his evidence could be taken on commission—that was to say, that this officer and gentleman was to let his evidence be taken in a back room, and then go to India, leaving the honour of this woman to be smirched with his in the Courts. That was a course which no man of honour in the House would say could possibly be taken by this gentleman. What was the alternative? Now, he (Mr. Lockwood) was trying to tell the story of the treatment of Dr. Briggs by the officials as calmly as he could, but he was bound to say he grew indignant when he said that this gallant officer was told that if he did not embark for India—and an embarkation certificate was handed to him for the purpose—he would be dismissed from the Service. Here was Dr. Briggs' position. This man's honour was affected. He (Mr. Lockwood) had always understood that, in this gallant Service, whenever the honour of an officer was at stake, he was called upon by those to whom he was responsible to take the readiest means of clearing himself from the imputations. But here they found that this officer had only this alternative offered to him, "Either you go to India and retain the emoluments of your profession and the high rank which you have won by your services to the country, or, if you do not do that you will be dismissed instantly; or," they said, "we will give you this further alternative, you may resign." The House would understand, without his (Mr. Lockwood's) stating it, the alternative was chosen by this gallant gentleman. He did resign, and remained in this country. The trial came on on the 27th of November, 1890. An offer was made before the trial came on to withdraw the charges against Dr. Briggs; but those who were responsible for

Dr. Briggs in that trial refused to allow such charges to be withdrawn, and insisted that this gentleman should have the opportunity of going into the box to deny on oath that there was a tittle of truth in the charges. What was the position of Dr. Briggs now? On November 27 he swore that the charges were false. No one had the courage to suggest the contrary; the finding of the jury or the tribunal before which the case came was that the charges were untrue. Again, what happened? One would have expected that the earliest opportunity would have been taken by the Department, or by these officials, to reinstate this gentleman. So far from it being necessary for Dr. Briggs to move, he would have thought that the initiative would have been taken by those who had forced the resignation on him. The trial took place on November 27, 1890; it was not until August 1, 1891, that the late Secretary of State for War (Mr. E. Stanhope) announced that he proposed to reinstate Dr. Briggs. He (Mr. Lockwood) would pause here for a moment to say that from the right hon. Gentleman and from the hon. Member for the Guildford Division of Surrey (Mr. Brodric) he received throughout the negotiations he carried on with them the greatest consideration. It was not the persons responsible for the Department in that House, either on one side or the other, who were to blame in this matter. He hoped that, although he should not be able to take a Division on the matter that he was now bringing to the notice of the House, there would be a strong intimation of opinion from Members on both sides. Parliament was not a dummy; and if right hon. Gentlemen on either side of the House were of opinion that this was a case of injustice, and that Dr. Briggs was entitled to be placed back in the Army in the position he had won for himself, no red-tape centurions outside should prevent this being done. Right hon. Gentlemen had the right to be regarded as other than mere figure-heads in Parliament representing their Departments. They had the right to be regarded as men of discretion, with courage to exercise that discretion in the face of officials who might not agree with them. On the 1st August, 1891, the Secretary for War made a promise of reinstatement, and on November 17,

1891, Dr. Briggs was gazetted back to the Service; but under what conditions? He (Mr. Lockwood) did not know that Dr. Briggs had won for himself a rank which no one senior to himself in the Service had attained; but when he was reinstated he found that he had lost 35 places in promotion which he had won at the risk of his life in the Service. Dr. Briggs refused to accept any such reinstatement. Communications were reopened between the late Secretary of State for War and himself and—if he would allow him to call him so—his hon. and “learned” Friend (Dr. Farquharson) near him. The negotiations were reopened. The reinstatement was cancelled in December, 1891; on March 22, 1892, a question was put in that House by his hon. Friend to the late Secretary of State for War, and an answer was returned, to which he wished to call attention. The question was—

“Whether he had further considered the case of Surgeon Major Briggs with a view to his being reinstated in the position which he would now occupy in the Service if he had not retired?”

The Secretary for War replied as follows:—

“I am of opinion Surgeon Major Briggs should not suffer any loss as regards position or promotion in consequence of an act which any gentleman was bound to perform, and which he performed under a pressure which no one could have resisted. Dr. Briggs will therefore be restored to the seniority he held before his retirement.”

This was a statement made by the right hon. Gentleman on March 22, 1892. This man had been eating his heart out since November, 1890, when the charges against him were blotted out by the finding of the Court; but, from November, 1890, up to March 22, 1892, he had been trying by every means in his power to get reinstatement, and it was not until that statement was made by the Secretary of State that he was able to obtain it. It was charged against Dr. Briggs that he had subsequently written a letter in which he used some strong language. Did not the House think that it was likely that a man who had had such tardy justice done to him would find it difficult, under the circumstances, to use the most calm and discreet language? Let the House remember the delay that had occurred. Dr. Briggs ought never to have been called upon to resign; and

*Mr. Lockwood*

when he had cleared his character and that of the lady who had been associated with him from all slur, reinstatement ought not to have been sought by him, but ought to have been brought to him and given without question. Nothing could excuse the delay which had occurred. But that was not all. On March 22, 1892, the highly satisfactory answer was given by the right hon. Gentleman. *Gazettes* came out one after another; in not one of them appeared the name of Dr. Briggs. This was a matter as to which, no doubt, the right hon. Gentleman would give them some information: Three *Gazettes* came out without mentioning the name of Dr. Briggs, and nothing was heard as to any further step being taken. On the 24th May Dr. Briggs was ordered to Chester. As he had not been gazetted he sought the advice of friends. He put the matter before them, and it appeared to them an anomalous position that Dr. Briggs should go to Chester and become associated with the Staff there when he had never been gazetted back to the Army. However, the short delay that was occasioned by these representations brought a peremptory telegram to him on the 22nd May from the Director General of the Medical Department (Sir W. Mackinnon) who asked him why he had not proceeded to Chester. On May 22 another *Gazette* came out, but there was no mention of the name of Dr. Briggs. On the 22nd March the right hon. Gentleman made his complete and most satisfactory statement. Before Dr. Briggs was gazetted he was peremptorily ordered to Chester. Then there was another *Gazette* with no mention of this gentleman's name. He received a peremptory telegram on the 27th May and on the 28th May he joined at Chester. On that very day—Dr. Briggs not having been gazetted, and, therefore, not being in a position if he committed any breach of discipline to demand to be tried by Court Martial—there appeared in *The Army and Navy Gazette* a letter signed “Veritas.” Dr. Briggs had in one of his letters to the Department charged that that letter came from an official in the Department, and that suggestion had never been denied. Dr. Briggs looked upon the letter as a trap deliberately laid for him, the writer knowing his temperament and knowing

that he would be likely to reply to it in terms that might not be regarded as the most discreet and temperate. "Veritas" took quite the official view of the case against Dr. Briggs, and said it was not necessary for him to attend at the trial unless he had a subpoena served on him. He (Mr. Lockwood) supposed he ought to have some respect for an official Department, but he had very little respect for a man who suggested that a person should not attend the trial of a petition for divorce in which he had been made a co-respondent unless he got a subpoena. He should not advise any member of the Department who was ever so unfortunate as to be in that position to take such a course. Dr. Briggs sent to *The Army and Navy Gazette* a reply to "Veritas," in the course of which he said—

"I trust, therefore, that although this is a very long letter you will insert every word of it as a mere matter of fair play. The Director General Medical Staff, is well aware of my opinion of his action in the whole affair from first to last. It was his privilege to have stood by and seen justice done; and he had the power to prevent a single step adverse to me in any way being taken before the trial, whatever might have been done afterwards; but, as I have myself told him, he was the agent of others who stood behind him in the background, and who were determined upon forcing me out of the country just before the trial, or my ruin. Who cannot form the answer for himself to that question? Why this desperate anxiety to get me out of the way at that trial? I venture to think, if fearless speaking-out on proper occasions was more common, cases of gross injustice and oppression would be less frequent in the Service than they are now."

That letter was written by Dr. Briggs on the 4th June. On the 11th of June he received this letter :—

"Horse Guards, War Office, June 11, 1892.

Sir,—I have the honour, by desire of the Commander-in-Chief, to forward herewith an article which appeared in *The Army and Navy Gazette* of the 4th inst., headed 'Medical Staff,' and purporting to have been written by Surgeon Major W. H. Briggs, containing remarks regarding the Director General Army Medical Department that are quite contrary to discipline.

His Royal Highness desires you to inquire of Surgeon Major Briggs whether the article in question is correctly attributed to him, and, in the event of this being found to be the case, to call upon him for an explanation.

I have, &c.,

CHAS. M. CLARKE, D.A.G."

He (Mr. Lockwood) called the attention of the House to the wording of this

letter. The only offer made to Dr. Briggs was that he should explain how it came about that the letter to the newspaper was written. If any suggestion had been made to him that he should prove his statements he would have accepted the challenge without a moment's hesitation. What he had always claimed was an opportunity of substantiating his suggestion. He wrote back at once stating that the letter was his, and that he accepted full responsibility for it. On the 18th June he received a letter from the War Office informing him that the reinstatement would not be proceeded with. It was interesting to note that in September an attempt was made by the Department to give Dr. Briggs his full pay and allowances while he was at Chester. At a subsequent stage of the proceedings it appeared that the Department regarded him as a temporarily-employed officer. Such an officer would not be entitled to full pay and allowances. Dr. Briggs had never been gazetted back into the Service, and yet it was held that his letter was a breach of discipline. He was sufficiently under discipline for dismissal, but not for a full inquiry into his conduct by means of a Court Martial. A correspondence took place between Dr. Briggs and the Department, and in October his solicitors wrote a letter on his behalf to the Department. The following reply was received :—

"Horse Guards, War Office, S.W.

Oct. 29, 1892.

Sir,—I have the honour, by desire of His Royal Highness the Commander-in-Chief, to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 21st inst., which, involving as it does a question of discipline, has been placed in the hands of the Adjutant General by the Military Secretary.

His Royal Highness regrets that you have failed to fully apprehend the facts which governed the decision which has been arrived at in your case, and I have, therefore, to place before you what those facts are :—

1. A letter from you having appeared in *The Army and Navy Gazette* of June 4, 1892, in which you made serious allegations against various officers, His Royal Highness ordered that your reinstatement, which was then on the point of appearing in the *Gazette*, should be suspended until you had explained or proved them.

2. These allegations you failed, after full time for consideration, to explain, prove, or withdraw, and the order for your reinstatement was therefore cancelled.

His Royal Highness desires me to return the accompanying statement of the Connemara

case, which does not relate to the question under immediate consideration.

I have the honour to be, Sir,

Your obedient servant,

CHAS. M. CLARKE, D.A.G.

W. H. Briggs, Esq., late Surgeon Major  
Medical Staff, c.o. Messrs. Holt and Co.,  
17, Whitehall Place."

As a matter of fact, Dr. Briggs had never been asked to prove his assertions, and the letter was on a par with a great deal of the treatment which he had received from the Department. His solicitors replied on the 3rd November, stating that he courted an opportunity of proving his statements and would avail himself of it. The answer received was the usual official one, that "the matter was now closed." No doubt in his published letter Dr. Briggs did speak in terms of disparagement of his superior officer, and no doubt it would not be advantageous to the Service that those in the Service should speak in disparagement of those who were above them. But what was the remedy? It was that those who did so should have the opportunity before a properly-constituted tribunal of proving whether they were justified or not. Dr. Briggs was willing to accept the proposition that he was under discipline at the time he wrote the letter. Would the Department grant that, being under discipline, he was entitled to an inquiry into his conduct? If he was not under discipline he could not, as a man of honour, withdraw his imputations until they had been proved to be true. If he was under discipline he was willing to express his regret for having written the letter, and to withdraw it. Under these circumstances, it was to be hoped the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary for War would reinstate him, and so remove from the Department the discredit of being connected with an act of gross injustice.

Notice taken, that 40 Members were not present; House counted, and 40 Members being found present,

\*THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (Mr. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN, Stirling, &c.): I venture to make an appeal to the House, not in my own interest, but in the interest with which the House has been dealing, to allow me to break the Rules of Debate so that I may proceed to answer the observations of my hon. and learned Friend without sacri-

Mr. Lockwood

ficing my right to discharge the duty which will lie upon me at the end of the whole Debate of answering to the best of my ability the other questions which may be raised in relation to Army matters. I am quite aware that, according to the regular and strict order of Debate, I ought to defer everything I have to say until the end of the discussion, but I feel that the course I propose to take will further the Business of the House, and I accordingly ask its kind indulgence. My hon. and learned Friend has brought forward a question the importance of which I will not under-rate, and one which has attracted a great deal of interest in many quarters. With regard to that question, I myself am in a happy position, because I, personally, as Secretary of State, have no responsibility in dealing with the matter. When I came into Office the matter had been decided, and was closed and concluded, and all that I have had to do has been to decide whether there is any reason for re-opening the case. My hon. and learned Friend has gone at considerable length into the earlier history of the case. He has recited the career of Dr. Briggs and the main facts of what I will speak of as the Connemara case and the subsequent action of the War Department. With the Connemara case I have nothing whatever to do. The War Office has nothing whatever to do with it, and never had anything to do with it. Whether the conduct of the Director General of the Army Medical Department was in all respects judicious and proper and regular is another matter, but, having gone into his conduct in the business with a perfectly impartial mind, I have not discovered the least room for suspicion. I am able to say frankly to the House that I do not believe, so far as my opportunity of judging has gone, that the merits of the Connemara case had anything to do with the action of the Director General of the Army Medical Department. Having come to that conclusion, I feel bound to state it, as I have no responsibility in the matter and no duty laid upon me to take one side or another. The Director General has dealt with Dr. Briggs as he would have done with any other of his officers. He had reason to believe that Dr. Briggs was taking a course by which, in effect, he would escape his proper turn of

foreign duty, thereby putting more of that foreign duty upon his colleagues, and he accordingly ordered that officer to proceed to India, and finally placed before him the alternative that my hon. and learned Friend has described. I would point out to the House, in justification of what may appear to be the somewhat strict conduct of the Director General, that it is no unusual thing—and it is only human nature to expect it—on the part of officers, both departmental and others, to urge any pretext they can find to escape a turn of foreign service when it happens to be inconvenient for them to fulfil it. That is only natural; but it is, at all events, the duty of those in charge of the Department to guard against this being done, and there is a Rule, which also applies to the combatant branch, that it is not sufficient for an officer to say, “I am going to be concerned in an action,” but he must produce the actual subpoena or actual order, or whatever it may be, of the Court with reference to the action which is brought against him. I understand that to be the ordinary precaution taken to meet the desire in some cases to escape foreign service. That accounts for the apparent rigidity and strictness of the action of the Director General in this case. As I have already said, I am not responsible for that action; but I feel bound, in justice to the Director General, to state that, so far as I have been able to look into the papers and to examine the facts, I do not believe that the Director General acted otherwise than under a strong sense of public duty in the steps he took. My predecessor in the office of Secretary of State stated in the House that Dr. Briggs would be reinstated. That passed a sponge over all that had happened before Dr. Briggs was put back in as good a place as he had previously occupied.

MR. LOCKWOOD: But he was not gazetted until long afterwards.

MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: My hon. and learned Friend complains of delays and also of certain arrangements of the roster. Well, I am not responsible, and I cannot say what the reasons for those delays have been. Although they may have been very tantalising at the time, I do not think they can now be regarded as very material. In the Spring of last year Dr. Briggs was ordered to

Chester on duty, and was at that time subject to Military Law. While in that position, he wrote a letter to a newspaper—certainly under strong provocation—recounting his view of the events which had occurred, and bringing a very injurious imputation against his superior officer. When that letter appeared, the matter passed out of the hands of the Director General of the Medical Staff, and the Adjutant General claimed to be heard on the subject. The Adjutant General is responsible for the discipline of the whole Army, and the view the Adjutant General took and takes of this case—a view with which I entirely concur—is that it is absolutely impossible to allow any officer in the Service to have an injurious imputation made against him in the public Press by his subordinate officer. I do not care, and it matters not one whit, from the point of view of military discipline, whether the imputation is true or not. But no officer has a right—and this is a well-understood fact—to bring an accusation of that sort against his superior officer in the public Press. There are ample means of making any grievance known to those in authority; and every complaint would be fully inquired into. Any Adjutant General, and especially the gallant officer who occupies at present the position of Adjutant General, would take very great care that any complaint properly preferred should be thoroughly examined—should be probed to the bottom, and a proper solution arrived at. But to allow an officer to write to the public Press attacking his superior officer is a course which cannot be defended from any point of view; and if the letter of Dr. Briggs was allowed to pass unnoticed, we should have no end to the number of letters which would be published in the newspapers; and it would be impossible to maintain the necessary discipline in the Army. I have pointed out that the truth of the accusation is not in question at all. The accusation may be perfectly true, but that is not the way to make it. It was a breach of discipline to make it in that manner, and it was, therefore, incumbent on the Adjutant General to take notice of what had occurred. But this letter and the action which was taken upon it occurred before I became responsible for the administration of the



War Office. Dr. Briggs was invited to say whether he was the author of the letter, and to explain himself. He was called upon to say what he meant, and to withdraw—

MR. LOCKWOOD: Not withdraw.

MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: Perhaps not in those terms; but his attention was called to the grave breach of discipline he had committed. Dr. Briggs refused to acknowledge that he had committed a breach of discipline, or to make any apology, or any withdrawal of the imputation. Under these circumstances, there was only one course open to the Military Authorities, and that was to cancel the reinstatement of Dr. Briggs. I am justified in saying that before that step was taken, Dr. Briggs was privately informed by the right hon. Gentleman the late Secretary of State that there would be no impediment to his reinstatement if he would withdraw the letter. But he refused to withdraw the letter, which stated that the Director General of the Medical Staff—

“Was the agent of others who stood behind him in the background, and who were determined to force me (Dr. Briggs) out of the country just before the trial, to my ruin.”

Dr. Briggs did not complain merely of the action of the head of the Army Medical Department; but he said there was a conspiracy for the purpose of effecting his ruin. He was invited to withdraw that letter; and if the letter had been withdrawn, there would have been abundant opportunity to put forward in the regular course any complaint against a superior officer; but Dr. Briggs would not withdraw, and the reinstatement was cancelled. Dr. Briggs made an appeal and a protest. Did we shut the door in his face? Not at all. Now my responsibility begins, for at this period the change of Secretary for War took place. At all events, after I took office the Deputy Adjutant General, on behalf of the Adjutant General, wrote again to him saying that if the letter were withdrawn the door would be opened to him; but again Dr. Briggs slammed the door in our face. I can use no other expression. I will use the mildest words I can apply; but how foolish has been the conduct of Dr. Briggs! He had been reinstated under the late Secretary of State for War. [Cries of “No!”] Well, he was not

gazetted—I decline to discuss mere technical terms—but he was re-employed with a view to reinstatement. He was therefore not only in a commanding, but in a victorious position, when he put himself out of court by writing this letter. A more foolish act was never committed, though it was done under strong provocation. A letter had appeared in a newspaper attacking him; and Dr. Briggs, not being discreet in dealing with affairs or in language, was goaded into publishing a reply and making this imputation. That is the reason why we have not once, but twice and thrice offered him the opportunity to withdraw the letter; but he declines to withdraw it, and stands by it. That was the position of events when I came into responsibility in the matter. I have never been adverse, and I do not find that the Military Authorities are at all averse, to reinstating Dr. Briggs on condition that the letter and the imputation are withdrawn; but it is perfectly absurd to suppose that an officer, such as Dr. Briggs, can efficiently conduct his duties while he remains as the author of an unwithdrawn letter bringing this injurious imputation against his superior officer. What would be the relations of Dr. Briggs and the Director General of the Medical Staff if this letter remained containing the *imprimatur* of the signature of Dr. Briggs, and bringing this dreadful accusation—for it is a dreadful accusation—against his superior officer? Like my Predecessor I have stretched every point to soothe the feelings and to smooth the ruffled feathers of Dr. Briggs. I repeat now what, as my hon. and learned Friend (Mr. Lockwood) knows, I have said before. I do not wish to go into the truth of the imputation. I do not wish Dr. Briggs to stand in a white sheet and assert that he had said that which was not true. I merely wish him to express his regret for a breach of discipline. If he will withdraw the letter, and the injurious imputation in the letter, there is still no reason why he should not be reinstated. What more can I do? As far as I can see, Dr. Briggs has formed a conception of the motive of his superior officer which is altogether unjustified; but, in any case, the imputation on his superior officer must be withdrawn before he can be reinstated. That is the attitude taken by the Adjutant General, an attitude which I have adopted and be-

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come responsible for. It is not only necessary in the interests of the Public Service, but it is a view which will command the approbation and adherence of every impartial man, that a stop must be put to the tendency to write such accusations to the public newspapers, instead of bringing them forward in the regular way, when they can be regularly dealt with. With all the sympathy which everyone must have in many respects for Dr. Briggs, and with all the regret that he has been so foolish as to knock himself down from the commanding position in which he had been set, in the interests of the Army and discipline if this glaring case had been allowed to pass without correction, it would form a precedent for all sorts of letters being published in a similar way, bringing charges against officers. It is my duty to protect officers against such charges; and as there are ample means of making complaints in the regular way, so long as I am Secretary for War I will do so. My hon. and learned Friend will admit that I have been most anxious to arrange this matter, and I believe that there has been and is no other desire on the part of the military authorities—if Dr. Briggs will make such a withdrawal of the letter as will satisfy the conditions I have laid down.

DR. R. FARQUHARSON (Aberdeenshire, W.) said, he regretted that this painful case should be again re-opened and brought before the House once more. He did not intend to go into what he might call the ancient history of the case, for it had been fully and ably stated by his hon. and learned Friend the Member for York; but he wished to say that he did not think his right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for War had been quite right in attributing to Dr. Briggs a desire to evade being sent out of the country on foreign service. Holding as he did a high opinion of the Army medical career of Dr. Briggs, he thought that was an imputation that should not have been made. The record of Dr. Briggs showed that he was a man who had served his country well, and the only desire he had had was to remain at home in order to be able to meet certain charges made against the honour of a lady in the only way, as the late Secretary for War had said, in which an

officer could meet them. Having gone into the case fully, he could not relieve Dr. Briggs himself of the responsibility of having foolishly disturbed the *status quo* that had existed before. He considered, with his right hon. Friend the Secretary for War, that Dr. Briggs would have done much better had he taken the excellent terms offered him by the Secretary for War in the late Government for his reinstatement. He looked upon Dr. Briggs' letter as an unfortunate accident only to be excused by the excuse which had been advanced—namely, that he had been overstrained by the long waiting and the rather suspicious delay to his reinstatement; that he had been in a state of great mental anxiety, and that in his cooler moments he would never have written such a letter. But admitting the case of the War Office up to the hilt, the punishment dealt out to Dr. Briggs was far too heavy for the offence. The career of Dr. Briggs had been a very distinguished one, and, as an old Army medical officer himself, he (Dr. Farquharson) could speak with some little authority in the matter, for he had had opportunities of knowing the value and the distinction of Dr. Briggs' services to the State, and he was sure that if Dr. Briggs were reinstated he would perform services quite as valuable in the future. He was bound to state that the terms of reinstatement suggested by the Secretary of State for War were satisfactory on the whole; but the difficulty was that Dr. Briggs was called on unconditionally and absolutely to withdraw the whole of the letter. The greater part of the letter was made up of a statement of the Connemara case, and if Dr. Briggs withdrew the letter wholly and unreservedly he would imply that his statement of that case was not true as a matter of fact. He would suggest a compromise. Dr. Briggs should be allowed to say that he wrote the letter under a misapprehension, as he did not believe at the time that he was under discipline; that he withdrew the imputations against his superior officer. That being done, the rest of the letter might be allowed to stand. Perhaps the Secretary for War would consider the matter from that point of view; for if Dr. Briggs were punished in the manner proposed, it would mean his ruin, and the services he had rendered to

the State entitled him to a more merciful consideration. He hoped some decision would be arrived at by which the services of such an excellent Army medical officer as Dr. Briggs would be secured to the State.

**MR. LOCKWOOD:** I have listened with great pleasure to the satisfactory statement of my right hon. Friend the Secretary for War, and I may say on behalf of Dr. Briggs that he is willing to express regret for the letter, and begs leave to withdraw it.

**MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN:** I am very glad to hear what my hon. and learned Friend has said. I am quite ready to say that if that is done it will be done on the same terms and conditions on which it could have been done in July or August last—namely, the reinstatement of Dr. Briggs.

**MR. JEFFREYS** (Hants, Basingstoke) said, he wished to direct the attention of the House to the case of a man named Jessett, a Warder of Crown Lands at Aldershot. The man was a very poor man, and he was not backed up in the same way as Dr. Briggs; but his case was all the same, worthy of great consideration and commiseration from the House. Jessett had been in the Army for some time; he originally enlisted in the Staffords, and was in that force for 13½ years. He had been through the Crimea, through the Indian Mutiny and other campaigns, receiving three medals for his services; and on his retirement he was engaged by the War Office as Warder of Crown Lands near Aldershot, which post he filled for 28 years, bearing all the time an unsullied character. The man did not retire from that position voluntarily; he retired on the advice of the officer commanding the Royal Engineers under whom he served. At that time Jessett had arrived at the age of 65. In a letter dated December, 1891, the officers commanding the Royal Engineers wrote to Jessett, stating that he should now take the pension that he had earned, and giving him notice that his active employment must cease three months from that date. Jessett did not inquire as to the pension he was entitled to; but on the strength of this letter from his superior officer he retired, and then

applied for his pension. The War Office put him off from day to day in the matter of the pension, and on the 25th November, 1892, he received a letter stating that the Secretary for War would inquire into the matter. In January of this year he was again told that his application for superannuation was still under consideration, and on the 20th February this year he was informed by the War Office that they had no power to make him any award under the superannuation grants. It, therefore, came to this: that the man having retired as he had thought on the express understanding given him by his commanding officer that he would receive a pension, he found himself, at the age of 65, adrift on the world unable to take up any other occupation, and with absolutely nothing to live upon. It was a very hard case. This man had served the country for 13½ years in the Staffords, and for 28 years as a warder in the War Department, making a total of 42 years, and yet he was told he was to receive no pension whatever. He (Mr. Jeffreys) found in the Estimates that other warders were receiving pensions. The Secretary for War had said that Jessett was obliged to retire owing to his old age, but his commanding officer in the letter did not say anything about that; and he found in the Army Estimates that there were several other warders similarly situated who have received pensions. He could assure the House that unless this man got some pension from the War Office, to which he held he was entitled, he was absolutely destitute, having no means of livelihood. No doubt the man resigned of his own accord, but he did so on the strength of the letter he received; and having resigned he was now cut off from his livelihood and debarred from the receipt of a pension to which he (Mr. Jeffreys) believed he was entitled. He hoped the right hon. Gentleman would take the matter into his consideration. In fact, in answer to a question the other day, the right hon. Gentleman told him he would; but he took this opportunity of raising the matter in the House for the purpose not of prolonging the Debate, but pointing out that this man, who was one of his constituents, had been badly treated and to express the hope that the right hon. Gentleman would be able to do something for him.

ARMY RECRUITING—FOREIGN SERVICE  
OF THE INFANTRY.

\*GENERAL SIR FREDERICK FITZ-WYGRAM (Hants, Fareham) said, he wished to bring under the attention of the House one or two subjects, one of which had reference to recruiting. He thought young men would be more inclined to enter the Army if it could be shown to them that it was to their advantage to do so, and this could not be done in any better way than by increasing the pay of the junior non-commissioned officers. It was quite true that they gave promotion from the ranks; but those who had earned that honourable distinction had long since left the locality in which they were born, and the fact, therefore, did not come before the eyes of the people of the locality. If they gave 2s. a day to a corporal he thought it would have a great effect in stimulating recruiting, and for this reason: The rank of lance-corporal was attained by a bright young man in a couple of years. He then would go back on leave to his native village with the stripes on his arm and with 2s. a day, and he (Sir F. Fitz-Wygram) believed he would set all the lads of the village on fire to join the Military Service. But he would ask them to go a step further, and increase the pay of the sergeants to 3s. a day, or 21s. a week. If a corporal could go back to his village at the end of two years, a sergeant would be able to go back at the end of four years, and they would find it would have a most remarkable effect. Not only would the young men be on fire, but their mothers and fathers—when they saw that a young man after four years' service was in a better position than the agricultural labourer who was the best paid man on the farm, and who was not likely to get more than 18s. a week after 30 or 40 years' service—would be urging them to join the Army. Other proposals had been made to encourage recruiting which he thought inexpedient and unnecessary. One was to increase the pay of the soldier all round 2d. per day, which would cost the country about £200,000 a year. Another proposal was to give free rations and increase the amount of meat to 1 lb.; but that, it was estimated, would cost £250,000 a year. Another proposal made the other night was to make entirely free the whole of

the messing of the Army, which was calculated to cost £650,000 a year. The proposal he made was a comparatively small additional expense, but it would be of immediate effect, as it would place at once before the eyes of recruits the advantages of joining the Army. They might place the bird in the bush before their eyes; but his belief was that the recruit looked more to the bird in the hand than to the two in the bush; his belief was that if they gave these immediate attractions to recruits, they would never want for the best class of men to reinforce the ranks of the Army. Do not let it be supposed he wished to say anything against an increase of pay to the older non-commissioned officers, but that was not the question he was now speaking about; he was only speaking on the question of recruiting. There was also another question concerning the recruiting he wished to call attention to, and that was the advisability of granting to their soldiers some employment during the time they were in the ranks. If they looked to their Reserve and talked to them as he had done, they would find the general complaint was not their treatment whilst in the Army, but that when they got into the Reserves they had no employment, the reason being that they had no trade to fall back upon, having joined the Army before they had learned a trade. He believed that complaint was perfectly true, because he had noticed that almost all the loafers amongst the Reserves came from the Infantry. He belonged to a Cavalry regiment himself, and he found very few Cavalry men loafing about the streets, the reason being that during their service they had not only been kept at work, but had learned a trade; so that they readily got employment about horses and stables, and as carmen; very seldom indeed was a Cavalry man seen loafing about. He did not place any particular virtue in the Cavalry man over the Infantry man, but, as he had said, the one had learned a business, and the other had not. In the same way, he seldom found a Royal Artillery man loafing about, because he had learned a trade; the same with the Royal Engineers, the Commissariat and Transport Service, all of whom, more or less, had learned a trade. He wished to ask the Secretary of State for War to do something to promote

industrial employment. He might be told a man joined the Army because he wished to be idle. He knew there was a good deal in that, but the proposal he had made was one worthy of attention. They had a corps called pioneers in the Infantry regiments; they were supposed to be workmen, but he did not think they had much employment. What he wished to ask the Secretary for War was to extend the pioneers of the regiment and make five pioneers in every company—total, 40, and send them to be trained at Chatham, so that they would be handy at all military trades. This, he believed, would be found to be useful in war as well as at home. For instance, if they sent out a company of Infantry, he doubted if they would have any of the men who knew how to throw up temporary entrenchments to secure themselves; therefore, it would be most advantageous to have five men properly trained who should go out with every company. He might be asked how he was going to employ these men at home. He should like to hand over to the pioneers of the regiment the whole of the barrack repairs as long as the regiment remained in barracks. He would start such a proposal in this way: Having sent the men to Chatham to be trained he would divide them into three classes, paying them 8d., 1s., and 1s. 6d. a day respectively; he would place them under a subaltern officer who was fond of that sort of work, and give him 2s. a day, and let him take charge of these men, to be employed at such times as they were not wanted for other duties. They might tell him there would be a difficulty in taking them away from parades and other duties. For his part, he did not believe in endless and everlasting drill and marching past in barracks. In the Cavalry and Artillery corps the men gave four or five hours a day to exercising and cleaning the horses, and he maintained that in smartness of appearance, drill, and that sort of thing, the Cavalry would compare not unfavourably with the Infantry; and if the Cavalry could spare five hours a day, surely the Infantry might spare four hours every other day; that was to say, he would set them to work every other day for an eight hours day. Then, as to payment. He would allow squads or gangs to undertake particular work, but

he would make this proviso: that the payment for all barrack work should never, under any circumstances, exceed half of what was paid now to civil contractors, and for the reason that they were employed upon military pay, and should not receive as much as those who were not so employed. At Aldershot they had an immense variety of work going on, and soldiers might well be employed in the rougher sort of work connected with the building that was going on there, an experience that would be most useful in the event of any future war, when the pick and the shovel would be required. They had £5,000,000 of money voted for barrack-work, and some not inconsiderable portion of that might be well earned by their Infantry soldiers with great advantage to the country, to the recruiting, and with great advantage to their efficiency in war. It might be said that under the present system the Infantry soldier could not possibly spare the time for that sort of work. Well, they had short service in the Cavalry and the Artillery, but they found time for something else besides marching about continually. In truth, there was nothing in the objection of want of time, and he would ask the Secretary of State for War to see if it was not possible to give effect to some such scheme as the one he had roughly sketched. He did not ask them to carry out exactly his proposal, but to do something in that direction, and appoint a Committee of Members of this House with power to call before them as witnesses some of the best and most intelligent of their commanding officers, when they would easily be able to form a scheme that would benefit both the Service and the soldier. Another point he wished to bring forward was in connection with their foreign service. He believed the foreign service of the Infantry was both excessive and unnecessary; they kept their garrisons abroad now the same as they did 50 years ago, when there were nothing but sailing vessels in which to send out their troops. His impression was that in the present day it would be a deal better for the troops of the line if they were kept in reserve at home instead of injuring their health and their morals at so many of their foreign stations. There were several of their foreign stations almost within a stone's throw to

*General Sir Frederick Fitzwygram*

which they could send out reinforcements in a few days, and in which he believed they might decrease the garrisons with advantage. He did not want to run any risks, therefore the fortresses and harbours should be secured against a *coup de main*. But take the case of Gibraltar, that was only four days' sail from England, and they had there four regiments. He would propose to reduce that garrison by one regiment, and keep it at home at its full foreign strength. Then they had Malta, only about seven days' sail from home. They had six regiments there, and they might reduce that by two regiments which could be brought home. That would give them three more regiments more than they had at home now. Then he looked further ahead, across to the West Indies. That, he admitted, was further off, but those who knew the West Indies knew well enough they had no force in the West Indies that could be defended against a Naval Power; that whatever Naval Power was the strongest would be the owners of those islands, and he saw no sense or reason in keeping a regiment there, and if required they could be sent out in 10 or 12 days. Then there was the Straits Settlement. That was a long way off, and could not be reinforced from home; but it was an unhealthy climate. There were no natives to give trouble, and the settlement ought to be garrisoned by Indian troops, and reinforced by a British regiment from India if necessary. Then there was an island called Ceylon; what on earth they kept a regiment there for he did not know and could not conceive, because it was so near to India, and they had a large naval station at Trincomalee. He did not wish to go much further. Total, six regiments kept in reserve at home instead of abroad. An hon. Member advised the other day that all our garrisons ought to be kept abroad. He differed from the hon. Member on that point, as he considered it very little good to have a garrison abroad if the men were constantly sick. It was said, and the late Lord Mayo was his authority, that the climate at Peshawar used to ruin the health of two British regiments quartered there every season. Lord Mayo told him that the invaliding from that station was perfectly

horrible, and so it was with regard to some other stations; they ought to be kept on full strength at home. He did not wish to see a single soldier the less, but it would be for the advantage of the soldier and beneficial to the nation if the reserve were at home instead of abroad. The only other point he would refer to was the necessity for better organisation of the Cavalry. In round numbers they had a Cavalry Force at home of 8,500 men, and in that Force he believed they had the best officers, the best non-commissioned officers and men and horses in the world, and there was nothing to prevent its being a most effective Cavalry Force, except the want of organisation. At present they had not a single Cavalry regiment they could send abroad at once strong enough to maintain itself on a war strain. The cause of that was because they frittered away their 8,500 men in 19 units, none of which were strong enough for purposes of war. They kept six regiments on strength enough to start on a campaign, but they had no reserve and no *dépôt* squadron, and therefore could not stand a war strain. Divide the regiments into 12 instead of 19 units, and the effect would be to have every regiment strong and fit, not only to go abroad, with the *dépôt* squadron, but fit to maintain itself whilst abroad. There would be no decrease in the number of officers, non-commissioned officers, or the men, and they would maintain the same proportion as they had now; the only sufferers would be the regimental staff. The cost would be nothing, but the difference would be great. At present they had 19 regiments of which they could not say one was fit for war, and the result of which he proposed would be they would have 12 regiments always fit for war. He held very strongly the opinion that in these days when wars broke out suddenly, and in every part of the world, that every regiment it was worth while to maintain ought to be prepared for war. He could not conceive a system more dangerous than having a regiment in the first line that was not sufficiently strong to stand the campaign. The main objections the Horse Guards had to recommending these alterations was a fear that the lesser number of regiments might afterwards be reduced in strength. Personally he believed there was nothing

to justify this distrust of the House of Commons; every proposal for the better treatment of the men was received with respect and attention by the House, and he thought that no antiquated system ought to prevail, and certainly should not be allowed to stand in the way of the efficiency of the Army.

#### APPOINTMENT OF SOLDIERS IN CIVIL DEPARTMENTS.

SIR J. FERGUSSON (Manchester, N.E.): I desire to say but a few words at the present stage, because, I would much prefer to discuss the Army Estimates after the right hon. Gentleman has made his statement, but as the latitude of discussion upon the first Vote in Committee will not be so large as it has hitherto been, as I am very anxious to set myself right to some extent, and also to make some remarks on a subject of importance to recruiting, I propose to do it on the present occasion. I would say that while I entirely agree with the gallant officer who has just spoken (Sir F. FitzWygram) in his very practical remarks upon some of the wants of the Army and the means by which it could be made more efficient; I could not agree with him that it would be prudent, from any point of view, to withdraw the garrisons from our first-class fortresses abroad with the view of replacing them on the unfortunate outbreak of hostilities. With regard to Gibraltar, anyone acquainted with the course of duty in that fortress must know the duties are so exceedingly heavy that it would be difficult to withdraw one battalion stationed there. And, moreover, I should like to remind the House that in modern wars it is not a word and a blow but a blow and a word. A few years ago an interesting Return was made by the Foreign Office to the House, which shows that war actually preceded the declaration of war, and what would be the condition of this country on an outbreak of war if we should have to reinforce many of our fortifications; if we had to replace the reduced garrisons of important places and send transports in hot haste to every part of the world in order to make up for the reductions that had been made? But, Sir, the point to which I chiefly desire to call the attention of the House is the appointment of

soldiers in Civil Departments. Very soon after I went to the Post Office my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for War (Mr. E. Stanhope) asked me to look into this matter, and endeavour to assist him in the endeavour he was making to find employment for the soldiers of the reserve and those discharged from the Army. After some consideration, I thought the Post Office might do a great deal in furthering my right hon. Friend's intentions, and I made an Order that, subject to any promise or understanding entered into with anyone already in the Post Office Service, all out-door appointments should be offered preferentially to soldiers. Within a few months after the making of such Order I found 2,000 such men already in the employment of the Department, and those best qualified to express their opinion stated with good results to the Service. These men, accustomed as they were to discipline and the punctual performance of duty, were found to discharge the work of the Postal Department with the regularity which might be expected of them, and seeing that only men of good character were taken, there were excellent accounts in respect to their conduct, and I believe now that the best relations are established between the Post Office and the War Office, so that, on the one hand, vacancies are immediately made known to officers in charge of districts; whilst, on the other hand, lists of soldiers available for employment are placed in the hands of officers of the Post Office. Sir, I hope this plan will be carried a great deal further. As has been remarked, my right hon. Friend has induced some of the large employers in the country to do a good deal more than they had done before to employ soldiers in the Service, and I believe other Departments are in the course of being opened. I asked to-day the Secretary for War if he could state what progress had been made by the Committee appointed by the Treasury to consider what posts in all Civil Departments could be given to soldiers, for I hope we shall shortly have information on this subject to show that the matter has been taken up in earnest. It is very well for people to applaud such a field of employment being opened up to soldiers. In the abstract they are always ready to do generous and liberal things, but those

who have anything to do with this matter will find when they come to put it into practice that all sorts of objections are made to such employment of soldiers; so that the head of a Department is placed in a difficulty. There are gentlemen in every part of the country who have, say, deserving servants who have been a long time in their employment, and for whom they are anxious to find good places in the Public Service. Unless there be a distinct intimation given on the part of this House that it is their desire that these places should be given to those who had already served the State, and whom it was particularly desirable to treat fairly and generously, depend upon it this matter will not go far. The right hon. Gentleman, my successor in the Post Office, said something the other day in this House which makes me fear he has been "got at" in respect to employment of soldiers at the Post Office. I know that my right hon. Friend approves of the matter in the main and in the abstract. But we heard something about the parents of boys not liking to go into the Telegraph Service unless they are to be employed altogether in the Post Office. It has been said, with injustice, that I tried to make a rule that when boys were engaged as telegraph messengers it was on some understanding that they were afterwards to enlist in the Army. Nothing was further from my mind, and I only heard of such proposal absolutely to repudiate it and reject it. A boy who is taken into the Telegraph Service at the age of 13 remains there till he is 17 or 18, and then he must pass into other employment. Those who have been already employed on some understanding as to that advancement will undoubtedly receive it, but there has been no such understanding as that which was alleged to have been made to which I have referred. I do not think that boys would suffer any hardship from serving seven years with the colours in the Army, if there was an understanding when they entered the Telegraph Service as messengers that, on enlisting in the Army, they have a preferential claim to employment before any other soldiers leaving the colours; and I do not think they would be any the worse as postmen for having learned the discipline and received the intelligence and the physical improve-

ment incidental to the Army Service. My right hon. Friend seemed to think telegraph boys could not be got unless parents could depend on their passing into the regular postal service after four or five years' service as messenger. I believe that is a delusion. I believe that the inducements held out to soldiers in the Army now are such that there will be no difficulty in getting boys to come as telegraph messengers and enlist in the Army afterwards. There is no compulsion but every inducement is held out to them. The conditions of the Army Service have been enormously improved, and I do not think there is such a thing now as a soldier being underfed. The rations supplied now are ample and young soldiers improve greatly upon it. Some hon. Members talked about there being no evening meals, but to my knowledge there are battalions at this moment where a good bowl of strong soup is given to all the men who call for it every night. But, Sir, it is to yield to an ignorant and unreasoning objection to say boys cannot be got to enter the Telegraph Service unless there is a promise of permanent, uninterrupted Civil employment. I will suggest to the Postmaster General that he might well turn his attention to those admirable establishments, the Royal Military School at Chelsea and the Royal Hibernian School. I have lately heard that many boys educated at those schools do not enter the Army, and, of course, as boys can only enter as drummers or in some such capacity, there must be a surplus of boys available for other duties, and no more suitable boys could be found from the Telegraph Service, in which smartness and punctuality are required, than these boys who receive an admirable education and excellent discipline in those schools. Again, I can fancy no greater encouragement to those schools, or the means of enlarging them, than to get a considerable reinforcement of telegraph boys from them. Having been accustomed to military life in its initial stage they are afterwards more likely to embrace it after a few years' service in the Telegraph Department. This question of civil employment is of very great importance, both as regards the safety of the State and the improvement of the rank and file of the Army. Other nations have recognised it. In Germany, where



nearly all the population pass through the Army, there is an enormous number of places in civil life open to soldiers preferentially which are not here, and with the greatest possible advantage. There is still an unreasonable prejudice against the Army service amongst our population. At one time, after hanging or Botany Bay, the most dreadful thing was to go for a soldier. That certainly ought not to be a feeling entertained now; and if even there was any foundation for it, for the greatest pains are taken to train soldiers up respectably, to give them every inducement to good behaviour, and to find useful employment for them after they leave the ranks. The best way to get parents not to object to their sons entering the Army is to give their boys a prospect of service afterwards; and if this be done you will fill your service with well-trained and thoroughly useful men, you will get a higher class of men in the Army, and your soldiers will return to civil life with an improved capacity for usefulness. I commend this matter to the earnest attention of the Government. I am aware there is no matter affecting the good of the Army which the present Secretary for War has not at heart and will do his best to carry out, and I venture to think that neither he nor the House will consider I have exaggerated the importance of the matter to which I have called attention.

#### THE 79TH CAMERON HIGHLANDERS.

\*MR. CORBETT (Glasgow, Trades-  
ton) wished to call attention to a matter which had aroused great interest throughout Scotland—namely, the proposal to transform the 79th Cameron Highlanders into a 3rd Battalion of Guards. When he heard of that proposal he wrote to all the Scotch Members asking them to give him their opinions on it, and the great majority of them—irrespective of Party, for this question did not assume any Party aspect—replied unhesitatingly in favour of maintaining the regiment. There was one exception, however. The hon. Member for Inverness very strongly opposed the continued existence of the 79th Highlanders, and declared it would be rather gratifying than otherwise to the sentiment of the Highlanders if the regiment were done away with. The hon. Mem-

ber said there was a strong feeling against joining the Army amongst Highland lads because they might be compelled to join in carrying out eviction proceedings. That seemed to him a very extraordinary argument, especially considering that the police forces of Scotland, who had, in the first instance, to enforce the law in these cases, were mainly composed of these same Highland lads who were said not to be willing to join the Army because the Army might, under some future Government, be employed in carrying out eviction proceedings. The opposition of the Member for Inverness to the maintenance of this regiment only brought out more clearly the strong feeling throughout Scotland in its favour. The Town Council of Inverness had passed a resolution in favour of maintaining the regiment, and they had also passed a further resolution calling the attention of the Member for Inverness to their first resolution, and asking him to do all he could to give effect to it. That was not the only protest in the hon. Member's constituency, for an extreme Radical paper in that Division denounced in the strongest manner the course the hon. Member for Inverness had taken, and strongly supported the plea for the continued existence of the regiment. If the replies he received from the Scotch Members were gratifying, the comments in the Scotch Press were not less satisfactory to the friends of the regiment, for almost all the papers, without distinction of Party, strongly advocated the continued existence of the regiment. One paper, however, belonging to an English gentleman, and a Member of the House, *The Dundee Advertiser*, did not share in the Scottish sentiment, but maintained that English gentlemen were the best judges of this question, and had the most right to speak upon it, because they were the kith and kin of the men who composed it. It was alleged that the regiment had ceased to be a Highland regiment, and had become in fact an English regiment. Well, that was very far from being the case. No one who had studied the history of the regiment could be under any doubt that it had maintained its old traditions. There had been no difficulty in keeping up the regiment in years gone by, and filling its ranks with the right material of

*Sir J. Ferguson*

Scotch and Highland recruits. In 1887 the regiment returned from Egypt 1,050 strong. It was then reduced systematically and intentionally to the home strength of 750 men. It had maintained that home strength during the whole time of its residence in Edinburgh till 1891 with the greatest ease. And what was the material of which it then consisted? Out of 750 men there were only from 130 to 140 Englishmen. Of the 600 who were Scotchmen, no fewer than 340 were pure Highlanders, a greater proportion of Highlanders than the regiment had at the time when it so greatly distinguished itself at the Battle of Waterloo. Those who were interested in this regiment were gratified by the assurance of the Secretary for War that the particular proposal to transform this regiment into a battalion of Guards had been abandoned. But what they were anxious for now was that it should be put upon a permanently secure footing by having a second battalion given to it. The position of the regiment, as a single battalion, had constantly been one of uncertainty; constant attacks had been made upon it, and it had had from time to time to be defended by strong expressions of Scottish opinion. What they wanted was that the recommendation of Lord Wantage's Committee should be carried out, and a second battalion given to the regiment. When the question was asked a little time ago in the House by the Member for Deptford as to granting a second battalion to this regiment, the reply of the Secretary for War was that he would be very glad to furnish this regiment with a second battalion if the hon. Member for Deptford would find him the recruits. He wanted to know why the Secretary for War should be so anxious to go to Deptford for recruits for this regiment, and why he should not be willing to give the same generous offer and challenge to the Members for Glasgow? If he would ask the Members for Glasgow to furnish recruits for this regiment—for a second battalion—and would allow the regiment to recruit there, then they would furnish him with a second battalion. Why was it they had not this privilege? It was not alleged that they would not be able to get a second battalion in Glasgow for this regiment. It might be alleged that throw-

ing Glasgow open to this regiment would injure the recruiting chances of other less popular and historic regiments which had Glasgow as a supplemental district in which to recruit. If other regiments which were less popular and less historic would suffer by competition with this regiment, that was no reason why the Cameron Highlanders should be destroyed or should cease to exist. He pointed to the splendid services and sacrifices rendered by the Cameron Highlanders. At the battle of Toulouse it entered into the engagement 414 strong, and only 215 men and one-half of its officers returned. At Quatre Bras and Waterloo it lost no fewer than 479 men. In one of his despatches Blücher specially commented upon the way in which these Highlanders over and over again resisted the attacks of the Old Guards of France. In the Crimea no regiment distinguished itself more, and "the thin red line" would never be forgotten as long as Scotchmen cared for the national traditions of military valour. In the time of the Indian Mutiny the regiment received the special commendation of Parliament and the Sovereign for the distinguished way in which it took its part in that great war. At the recent engagement at Tel-el-Kebir it was a member of this regiment, Donald Cameron, who in the storming of the outworks was the first to reach the top and give his life to his country. These were services which he hoped Scotchmen would never forget. He knew they might be told that this was a mere matter of sentiment, but he maintained that civilians like himself could see as well as military men that in military matters sentiment was a practical force. They all remembered the words of Sir Colin Campbell, "There are none but Highland bonnets here." Sir Colin knew that the traditions of the Highland regiments affect all who join their ranks, and the splendid services rendered under his inspiring words showed not only the value of the regiment that was now in jeopardy, but showed the wisdom of the sentimental words by which their heroism was inspired.

MR. HOZIER (Lanarkshire) cordially agreed with every word of the eloquent speech of his hon. Friend. He (Mr. Hozier) wished to call special attention to a local fact in connection with the 79th Highlanders and the other kilted

regiments. The Secretary for War must be aware that recruiting for the kilted regiments was entirely closed in Glasgow and in Hamilton. Glasgow was about the best place possible for recruiting Highlanders; but it was now closed against the kilted regiments, and if a Highlander wished to enlist for one of these regiments he was told he could not do so, and was asked to join some other regiment. He knew there was a form which might be filled up by a Highlander who wanted to serve in a kilted regiment, but this led to delay, and the privilege was only granted to men who obstinately refused to enlist in any regiment except a kilted regiment. It was rather hard it should be thrown in their teeth that this regiment was not composed of Highlanders, or even of Scotchmen, to the extent it ought to be when there was this restriction on recruiting. Again, it was rather hard that when a vacancy occurred in the majority of the regiment an outsider should be put in instead of an officer being promoted.

#### GOVERNMENT FACTORIES.

\*CAPTAIN BOWLES (Middlesex, Enfield) wished to refer to a matter affecting his constituents. Last year, a great reduction was made in the Government factory at Enfield Lock, the wages bill being reduced from £160,000 to £120,000 a year. He held that the policy of employing private firms for the manufacture of rifles was not one that recommended itself, whether on the ground of economy or of expediency. The first contract that was given to private firms was for 100,000 rifles at £5 10s. per rifle. Rifles were now manufactured at Enfield at a cost of £3 10s. each. He knew that future orders to be given to the trade were to be given at a less price, but he wished to point out that no less a person than Mr. Rigby, the superintendent of the factory at Enfield, in a paper read before the Society of Engineers, summed up the matter in these words, showing that it was necessary to the success of the factory that all hands should be fully employed and the machinery not allowed to lie idle—

“The success of the whole system depends upon a large output. The staff is necessarily expensive, so great vigilance is required to prevent material from being spoiled, and to prevent labour from being wasted on faulty material and for various other objects. All the costs of staff, adminis-

trative and clerical, lighting, heating, and power, maintenance of machinery and buildings, stores and depreciation, besides tools of all sorts, gauges, cost of inspection by the factory viewers, costs of store department, work-takers, police, rates and taxes, subscription to church and schools, &c., are charged to indirect expenditure; and, as such, are added as a percentage to the direct cost of the production of the year. If the output is large, the burden of indirect charges is spread over it and easily borne; with a restricted output it becomes heavy, and the costs of all articles produced are correspondingly high.”

Last year he had to complain of the most unfair advantage which had been given by the Government to the Small Arms Factory at Birmingham, and he was sorry to see this year that the factory at Birmingham was even in a worse position than the factory at Enfield. Therefore, he could not help thinking that it must in some way be due to private trade that these large reductions were taking place in the Government factories. He hoped before long that if the Secretary of State, or those who controlled the War Department, did not see their way to economise by employing the Government factories in preference to private trade, that the Treasury would bring some pressure to bear on them, for he felt, and we have the authority of the Superintendent of the Enfield factory, that there must be a certain output if the work was to be done economically. It was necessary, in the interest of economy, that the Government factories should be given a larger share of work than he thought they were likely to receive during the coming year. With regard to pensions, he could not help thinking that an establishment was a good thing for those who worked for the Government, and for the country at large. He believed the reason the Admiralty paid pensions was that in the time of war they might have a certain hold over *employés* in the different departments. On the subject of the advantage of pensions, Mr. Rigby said—

“The system of pensions, to which all men were formerly entitled on completing a full term of service, aided to attach the men to the locality, and many of the men now in the works are of the third generation of *employés*.”

To such an extent did the men get attached to the district, that knowing that when their years of labour in the factory were over they should remain in the district with their pensions, many of them, out of their savings, had

bought plots of land and built freehold cottages. It would be well, therefore, for the Government to see whether there should not be a system by which these men, who had served many years in the Government factory, should get pensions in their old age, and be kept off the rates. Owing to the large reductions that were made in the Government factories during recent years, a number of men who had been a long time in the factories had been discharged, and had in the end become chargeable on the rates of the locality, so that not only had a large number of his constituents lost employment, but the burden of the rate-payers of the district had been increased. He would raise the question more fully on another occasion, but he thought it well to say those few words before the Speaker left the Chair.

Mr. JESSE COLLINGS (Birmingham, Bordesley) said, the hon. Member for Enfield had stated very truly that in the Estimates for the coming year the Sparkbrook factory would fare worse than the Enfield establishment. This was a question in which he was specially interested, because Sparkbrook was situated in the division of Bordesley, which he had the honour to represent. The present Estimates meant the discharge of something like 500 men, a very serious fact to contemplate. Of course if the demand for rifles was smaller than formerly, there must of necessity be a discharge of men, but he maintained that the reduction should be made fairly all round. The late Government reduced the wages account at Enfield from £200,000 to £160,000, and at Sparkbrook from £75,000 to £60,000. There was thus a reduction of 20 per cent. all round. It was, however, now proposed to reduce Enfield by 25 per cent. and Sparkbrook by between 40 and 50 per cent. That was not fair to Sparkbrook. Sparkbrook did not ask any favour from the present Government. Unfortunately, Birmingham was not specially in favour with the Government. [*Cries of "Oh!"*] Well, he could tell the Government that there was a very widespread feeling in Birmingham that its treatment resulted to a great degree from want of favour. He did not suggest that that consideration weighed with the right hon. Gentleman, but he was telling the right hon. Gentleman that a widespread feeling

amongst the artisans of Birmingham was that if Birmingham had returned eight Separatists instead of eight Unionists there would have been a difference made in its favour in the Estimates of the present year. He was also ready to admit that the agitation in Birmingham against the War Office during the time of the late Government was very great. They were charged with favouritism, sweating, and other things. All those charges were absolutely untrue. They were not formulated by the artisans and workmen in Sparkbrook, but by political agitators for political purposes. The leader of those agitators was an adopted candidate of the Gladstonian caucus in Birmingham. That gentleman quoted statistics which were absolutely incorrect, and made charges which had not the least foundation; but he received his reward, for he was now one of our local labour correspondents. He did not charge the President of the Board of Trade with any cognisance of the matter; but he warned the right hon. Gentleman against the adoption of that pernicious American doctrine of the spoils for the victors. The questions which had been asked of the Secretary of State for War during the last two or three days had thrown no light on the subject of the unfair treatment of Sparkbrook. When asked for the reason of the decrease in the Vote for Wages at the Small Arms Factory, the right hon. Gentleman said that if they put the increase on the Bagot Street establishment, which was a small repairing shop, to the Sparkbrook Vote they would find that the reduction was about equal to that at Enfield. The statement was not correct. The reduction was very considerably more than that made at Enfield. For years the normal Vote for Bagot Street had been from £25,000 to £28,000 per annum. Last year the late Government reduced the Vote to £16,000. The present Secretary of State had submitted that £17,000 was to be spent in Bagot Street during the present year, so that the conclusion was that, although £26,000 was put down for Bagot Street, it was a mere paper increase. Bagot Street had nothing at all to do with Sparkbrook. It was merely a repairing shop, and had no connection whatever with the Small Arms Factory. If there happened to be a glass manufactory at Birmingham, and the right hon. Gentle-

man increased the Vote for it, he might just as well have said:—"We have reduced the Votes for the making of guns, but we have given a larger Vote for glass bottles." Then it was asked if the works at Bagot Street were to be removed to Sparkbrook, and the right hon. Gentleman replied, "Not for another year." That meant that in a short time the repairing works were to be removed from Bagot Street to Sparkbrook, and that Sparkbrook was to be discontinued as a manufacturing place. The hon. Member for Enfield, quoting Mr. Rigby, stated truly that the success of a manufactory depended upon the output, because the fixed charges were so large. Sparkbrook was equal to the turning out of from 700 to 1,000 rifles a week, but when the reduction contemplated by the Government took place it would turn out about 200 rifles a week. It would, therefore, be seen that when they put all the fixed charges of a great manufactory on 200 instead of 700 rifles, it would make the cost of the rifles correspondingly greater. Next year, if this Government were in power—for the sake of the working classes in Birmingham he trusted they would not be, and if one might judge from present appearances they were not likely to be—what would happen? The right hon. Gentleman would say, "Oh! the rifles at Birmingham cost £4, whereas at Enfield they cost £3," the difference being the result of the restriction of output as a consequence of the policy of the Government. In reply to another question the right hon. Gentleman said the cost of rifles at Enfield and Birmingham was about £3 15s. He asserted that rifles were produced at Birmingham 2s. 6d. cheaper than at Enfield, and as 92,000 rifles were produced at Sparkbrook in 1892, there was thus a saving of between £11,000 and £12,000. Sparkbrook was the most perfectly-equipped small arms factory in the world. When it was sold to the Government, owing to having been starved through the lack of orders, for £55,000, having cost £150,000, there was a distinct understanding that it should be kept up as a small arms manufactory. He had a letter proving that point, but he would not trouble the House by reading it. [*Ministerial cries of "Read!"*] He was challenged to read the letter by some new Members, who seemed to think

*Mr. Jesse Collings*

that the turning of 500 artisans and their families out of employment was of little consequence. The letter was dated October 9, 1883, when the question of the purchase of the manufactory was under consideration, and was written by the Chairman of the Committee of Liquidators. The letter stated that the proposed transfer of the factory to the Government might be advocated on the grounds of economy, and pointed out the advantages of Birmingham as a manufactory for arms on the grounds of its local safety and its central position for the rapid and cheap distribution of arms over the Kingdom. As a further argument, when the Government took over that there were £30,000 at least spent on new machinery on the understanding that the work would be proceeded with. Even the great steam hammers were taken up and reset, clearly showing that then the factory was intended for something more than repairing locks and browning gun barrels. There was every means provided for turning out 1,000 rifles a week. But soon steps were taken to dismantle the factory and transfer the work to Enfield. The late Secretary for War then received a deputation on the subject, and he listened to the arguments in favour of retaining the factory, the arguments and representations placed before him being general, and none of them local. The defects in our military system were pointed out, and the advantages of a factory at Birmingham clearly shown. The late Secretary for War yielded to the arguments, and in consequence the wages item in the Estimates for 1889-90 rose from £35,000 to £65,000, and the increase was sustained until 1892, when there was a 20 per cent. reduction. The reduction was a fair one, because there was a similar reduction at Enfield. The present reduction, however, everyone must see, meant the starving of the place as a manufacturing centre, and he hoped the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary of State would frankly say whether it was the intention of the Department to do that. The right hon. Gentleman might repeat the statement that it was never intended that this place should be more than a repairing shop; but 12 months ago there was a great crusade against this factory on political grounds—a crusade carried on by a certain newspaper—a paper published in

London by the friends, or rather masters, of the right hon. Gentleman the present Secretary for War. The late Government were accused of corruption for doing that which, in the public interest, was really a good thing. The newspaper paragraph contained this significant sentence—

"Now we ask the Liberal Leaders what are they going to do? Will Mr. Campbell-Bannerman, who, probably, before long, will have this matter under his control, allow this latest War Office job to pass without inquiry or protest?"

The desire of the writer of that paragraph had been fulfilled and the grant for Birmingham had been cut down to starvation point, with a view to ultimate suppression. He did not wish to say a word against Enfield, but he would remind the House that Enfield had other work, and had a much larger percentage of work. According to the Ordnance Report for 1892, work to the extent of £448,000 had been given to Enfield, whereas Birmingham had only received £113,000. In regard to the magazine rifle the cost of labour in proportion to the total cost of production was 49 per cent., whilst it was only 43 per cent. at Birmingham. In regard to the ordinary rifle this proportion was 43 per cent. at Enfield and 36 per cent. at Birmingham. Enfield was much more expensive, while Birmingham was the natural centre of skilled artisans. Enfield was a bottomless pit of expense to taxpayers. Created 40 years ago as an experiment, it had been an official pet ever since. Even inventions of Birmingham gunmakers were appropriated without acknowledgment. The "protector" for the new rifles was invented by a Birmingham maker 20 years ago, patented, and offered to Government, but now the patent being out the Department appropriated it without any acknowledgment. What he asked for was an inquiry into the whole matter. He did not know whether it was too late, but he asked, now that the right hon. Gentleman knew the injustice that was being done—if he did not know it before—would he remedy it and provide the means by which Sparkbrook might be put in the same position as Enfield? The right hon. Gentleman might rely upon it that they would not allow the matter to sleep. An injustice was being done to his (Mr. Collings') constituents without reason. They would not submit to

this injustice. They would, if necessary, press the demand for inquiry by some other means until this great manufactory at Sparkbrook was treated with the same consideration as other factories.

#### THE VOLUNTEER SERVICE.

COLONEL BROOKFIELD (Sussex, Rye) said he had the following Notice on the Paper:—

"To call attention to the Volunteer Force; and to move, That, in the opinion of this House, the dearth of combatant officers in the Volunteer Service is a matter requiring the immediate consideration of the military authorities."

He was afraid that this subject was not quite so popular and attractive as some of those which had engaged the attention of the House that afternoon, but, at the same time, the subject of the Volunteer Service was one which possessed very deep interest for an increasingly large number of people in this country, and, he was glad to think, was regarded with more interest also by the military authorities and those who had control of the military policy of the country. In the first place, it was necessary to ask the House to realise what the dimensions of the Volunteer Force were. The numbers had varied slightly since the Force came into being. They had sometimes been larger than now, and sometimes, on the other hand, considerably less; but a sort of average which seemed to be maintained was the very respectable one of considerably over 200,000 efficient men. The composition of the Force was a matter of great interest to military students at the present time. Besides a small handful of Cavalry—almost too insignificant to be included in the calculation—they had a Force of no less than 12,500 Volunteer Engineers, 40,000 Artillery Volunteers, and an Infantry Force of 163,000. In addition to this, it was fair to remember the enormous informal Reserve of those men which must be existing throughout the country—men who had served for a short time in the Force, and would be willing to resume their connection with the Service in any national emergency. On this subject of the Reserve he would ask the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary of State for War to give his consideration to a very interesting proposal now on foot for formally establishing a body of Volunteers as a Reserve Force. That

matter was well worth consideration. As to the organisation of this very large Force, it was, of course, the case now that they were mobilised—at least on paper. The Infantry were divided into brigades under brigadiers. They were all assigned their allotted tasks in the case of invasion, and he thought it fair to observe that they showed an amount of efficiency and zeal and intelligence which was highly to their credit. But the question he more immediately felt himself confronted with was: What was this large force for? What were its definite duties? The right hon. Gentleman the Secretary for War had been at pains on more than one occasion to impress on Parliament and the country that the Army was never to take part again in a foreign expedition, and that Great Britain was to be content with regard to military matters to accept the position of a second or third-rate Power. But whether the right hon. Gentleman was correct in his calculations or not—matters of this sort were entirely beyond the control or the speculations of statesmen, however eminent—it was, of course, admitted that the danger of this country being invaded was a definite danger, which must be systematically provided against. As to the part which this large force took in the calculations of the military authorities, he might be permitted to quote the words of Lord Wolseley—an officer whom he had often thought that he had found to be wrong only afterwards to discover that he was right. Lord Wolseley said that the Volunteer Force was a most important factor in the defence of the country; that if we had no Volunteer Force we should have to treble the Army or leave the country exposed to the most appalling risks. Having regard to this opinion of Lord Wolseley, he (Colonel Brookfield) thought that the condition of this Force was not a matter of sentiment but of business, and that it ought to be approached in that spirit by the military authorities, and by that House which criticised the action of the authorities. In dealing with this subject he would relieve the mind of the right hon. Gentleman on one point. The right hon. Gentleman was, no doubt, in the habit of thinking when he received communications from Volunteer officers or questions affect-

*Colonel Brookfield*

ing the Force were raised in that House, that the end of all would be a request for increased grants of money. He (Colonel Brookfield) did not intend to ask for any money for the Force on that occasion. What he wished to ask the right hon. Gentleman to do was to improve, or to initiate an improvement, in the status of the Volunteers as part of the available Force of the country; to make some small minor improvements in the internal discipline of the Service, and to turn his attention to a matter of growing importance—a matter that amounted almost to the dimensions of a national emergency, the great dearth of officers for the Volunteer Service. These were three practical proposals, and he hoped not to have to occupy much of the time of the House in examining them. It was a maxim in this commercial country that if they wanted a good article they should pay for it. But what he complained of was that in this branch of the Services they paid for a good article and got a very medium one in exchange. In saying this he should not like to be misunderstood. So far as the Volunteers could give any return in the way of personal sacrifice of time and money—as, for example, in attending manœuvres—they always showed their willingness to do so. It was one of the most encouraging signs of the times, the great zeal with which the Volunteers entered into their duties. But the point for which he contended was that the country did not get proper value for the grants made to the Service—they did not demand of the Volunteers all that they had a right to demand. The chief weakness at present lay in the very anomalous position the Volunteers occupied—in the artificial basis on which the whole organisation rested, and the constant attempt of the authorities to graft something in the nature of a new military system upon the old organisation of 1859—an organisation which he thought had very little relation to the present condition of the Service. They could speak of the old organisation of 1859 with a certain amount of enthusiasm. The Force of 1859 was the best thing which they were capable of producing at the time. But the conditions of the Service, the basis in these days, was not well adapted to the nation's needs, and to present notions of mobilisation in

emergencies. The first important respect, therefore, in which he would point out the urgent need of reform in the status of the Volunteer Service was with regard to the power lying in the hands of the authorities for availing themselves of the Volunteer Service. It was almost incredible—he very much questioned whether the country or the House realized that at this moment neither the Government nor the military authorities had power to call out a single volunteer—even in time of war. A French writer—Max O'Rell—had satirized the system, and pointed out that insurance offices did not make any extra charge for the policies which they issued on the lives of Volunteer officers. The satire was justifiable when they considered that no power existed to call the Force out in time of war. When no such power existed what was the use of spending money in educating Volunteers, in mobilising them into brigades, and in encouraging the military spirit—of the growth of which they had encouraging signs? He had quoted just now the opinion of Lord Wolseley as to the potential value of the Force. But if no power existed to call out the Force at the proper moment it would be more logical to disband the Force at once, and spend the money to secure the services of men under different conditions of discipline. The only occasion on which the State had the right under present conditions to call for the services of the Volunteers was in the case of actual or apprehended invasion. In that event the Queen could proclaim that the services of the Volunteers were required, and deserters would be punished as such. He would suggest an improvement in that matter—as to the time when the Government should avail themselves of the services of the Volunteers. Instead of only calling them out when there was actual or apprehended invasion, there should be power to call them out, or a portion of them, whenever an order for the embodiment of the Militia was in force. That would, in the nature of things, be a time of emergency. In these days a struggle between this country and some other might, if it arose at all, arise suddenly and be perhaps decided in a few months or less. It would be highly important for the authorities to be able to put their hands

on every available factor. The right hon. Gentleman would notice that this suggestion was one that was insisted upon very strongly in 1888, in the Debate which took place on the National Defence Act, and he believed that the proposal at that time as regarded the Volunteers was only defeated by a sort of jealousy of the Force which seemed to be felt in a certain quarter of the House. All Volunteer commanding officers had had confidential instructions as to what should take place in the case of mobilization, and knew where they were to go to. That was a great step in advance. But it would greatly improve the *morale* of the force if the men knew that they were for the future not only to perform the duties which they chose for themselves, but that the State had a right to call on their services in a less serious emergency than that of invasion or apprehended invasion. To proceed, an impression existed that Volunteer officers themselves were always asking for money. So they were, and it was one unfortunate condition of their existence that they had to ask for money in an eleemosynary way in their different localities. Still, he did not think that the rest of the population should greatly complain of that. It was simply a sort of insurance fee that they paid, and most of them were too lazy to do any work of the kind themselves. Other people thought that what Volunteer officers were always seeking was the enjoyment of military rank and decoration. Of course everyone had met with that sort of officer. He had not the smallest sympathy with him. Better than money rank or decoration would be an increased reality in their rank as soldiers. But let the House go to his next point. He would make a few observations on the condition of the Service in ordinary times of peace as at the present time. One of the most disheartening features in connection with the Volunteer Service was the attendance at drill or rifle practice—the dropping in on one occasion of two or three men, and perhaps two or three hundred on another. He recognised that that was one of the inevitable consequences of the conditions of the service, and he did not propose to make any radical change to remedy that part of the evil. It was one of the inevitable consequences of Volunteers having other avocations to



attend to. But what he wished to point to was that some employers were so selfish and unpatriotic as to throw difficulties in the way of the men attending drill or camp, and that some means should be found to discourage their taking that course. The employer of labour who actually dismissed a man from his service because he was a Volunteer and for no other reason, should be subject to the full penalties of the law as to wrongful dismissal whatever they might be. On the other hand, the employer who showed patriotic self-sacrifice, desiring to help the Service, should have encouragement. He was happy to say that there was an increasing number of employers who did take a proper and liberal view of their duty in this respect. With regard to the matter of attendance at drill and in camp so far as the Volunteers were concerned, although compulsory attendance was out of the question and was foreign to the conditions of Volunteer service, there might be some qualification of the existing system. At the present moment the Militia were called out for a month every year. But to get to a closer parallel, the Yeomanry were brought up for their training for six days, or a week's permanent duty. He could see no reason why three days out of the 365 should not be devoted to continuous drill, and why the State should not then have the right to demand and enforce the attendance of Volunteers to this duty. These three days might be arranged for without interfering with the other duties of the men. To the Volunteers belonging to Metropolitan corps very likely the three days following Good Friday would be found most convenient, and in the case of corps in agricultural districts probably it would be well to choose the three last days of the annual encampment, including the inspection day. He believed that that would have a most beneficial effect, and that it would not be followed by prejudicial consequences so far as recruiting for the Volunteer Service was concerned. The right hon. Gentleman the Secretary for War need have no fear of this being regarded as an unconstitutional infringement of the liberties of the British subject. But there was another respect in which he thought great improvement was needed. He had said just now that much of our notions as to

the Volunteer Force at the present time had been grafted on to the old ideas conceived in 1859. Well, the condition of the Force in 1859 was such that it was thought proper and compatible with discipline for the rank and file to be taken into the confidence of the officers (whom they usually elected themselves), in regard to all the details of the management of the corps. The result of this was that to make any change in the "rules" of the corps, as they were called—and are still called—it was necessary that a meeting of the corps should take place. He had frequently brought this matter under the notice of the right hon. Gentleman's Predecessors and they had invariably expressed some sort of sympathy with him, and had acknowledged the fact that meetings of all ranks of the corps were incompatible with discipline. The right hon. Gentleman was so accustomed to saying in public that everything that was for the best that he had never found himself able to take any public opportunity of remedying this state of things. The Secretary for War would surely acknowledge that it was a most disorderly provision of the law that, in order to pass the rules or the accounts of a Volunteer corps, it should be necessary to have a sort of parade, with possibly every private Volunteer present, and all enjoying the full right to move amendments. Of course, they behaved very much better than to do so. He had, however, heard of a case in which an adjutant of a corps came into collision with one of the old-fashioned sergeants on one of these occasions. The sergeant said he had an amendment to move, and the adjutant told him if he did not hold his tongue he would put him under arrest. He (Colonel Brookfield) often wished that in some of the deliberations of the House of Commons such a summary course were possible. Another point on which he desired to lay some little stress was that of the position of commanding officers in reference to the orders they received from the authorities. The battalion staff of every Volunteer regiment included, of course, an adjutant, with a sergeant-major and instructor to each company, all of whom were serving under the Mutiny Act. The only person on the battalion staff of a Volunteer corps who was not under the Mutiny Act was the command-

ing officer himself, who, it might fairly be assumed, was the last person who would be guilty of mutiny. The result was that that unfortunate officer constantly received communications from the authorities asking him whether "he would like this," or "that he could manage that." Inquiries of that sort were the most irritating kind of communications commanding officers ever received. They liked to get definite orders, and if they were placed under the Mutiny Act he believed it would greatly conduce to the discipline of the Service. There was only one person who held a more anomalous position than the commanding officer, and that was the new brigadier, who was such an utterly non-descript and absurd personage that his position must attract attention sooner or later. In most cases he was a retired Army colonel who had most likely seen war-service, and was known to be a good handler of men. He was dressed in the uniform of a General Officer, and had his staff; yet, when he went into the field in presence of the colonel commanding the regimental district, he had to be hidden away somewhere so that no question of precedence should be raised. If the right hon. Gentleman would make inquiries at head-quarters respecting this matter, there was not the slightest doubt that he would find that grave complications had arisen, and that it was really time to have the precedence of brigadiers of Volunteers definitely decided. A few observations upon the present dearth of Volunteer officers would not be out of place. The Volunteer Returns did not show how matters stood in this respect, and he would suggest that in future Volunteer Returns one column should be used for showing the number of officers in each corps. The right hon. Gentleman the Secretary for War had stated, in answer to a question, that the number of vacancies in commissions at the present time was 1,677, and what was more serious was that 1,417 of these vacancies were in the junior ranks. It was almost impossible to describe the demoralisation that came over a small company or battery when they had no commissioned officer to look after them. When the commanding officer or inspecting officer visited them, and found they did not turn out properly, the Instructor shrugged his shoulders, and when some

explanation was insisted upon he had to say, "How can the men be expected to attend to their duties, when they do not get a good example from those they are accustomed to look to for guidance!" The one redeeming point was that the non-commissioned officers, whom he had always been accustomed to regard as the real back-bone of the Volunteer Force, were not only an exceptionally fine body of men, but exceptionally useful, and exceptionally patient under great difficulties. But for their services he did not know what would happen. He had glanced at the Army List, and selected two or three typical cases from different parts of the United Kingdom, to show how matters stood with regard to the dearth of officers. He found that the 3rd Volunteer Battalion of the King's Own Borderers—a regiment which he came upon haphazard—had 10 captains on the establishment, and 10 serving, 15 subalterns on the establishment, and only six serving. Turning to Wales, he found that the 1st Volunteer Battalion of the Royal Welsh Fusiliers had 12 subalterns on the establishment and only six serving. Coming to England, he found that the 1st Volunteer Battalion of the Manchester Regiment had 13 captains on the establishment, and 12 serving, whilst of 20 subalterns on the establishment, only six were serving. He would undertake to point out to the right hon. Gentlemen the Secretary for War a plan by which he could remove the deficiency of officers as if by magic, without spending any money. It was evident that the class from which the Volunteers expected to obtain officers did not provide them. There appeared to be three ways of getting over the difficulty. One was to offer that class some powerful inducement to change the attitude they had taken up with regard to the Volunteers; the second was to go to a different class for the supply; and the third was to adopt a judicious blend of the first two methods. It had been quite erroneously pointed out, in the Press and elsewhere, that the reason for the dearth of Volunteer officers was to be found in the expenses to which they were subjected. He believed that the expenses of the Volunteer officer at the present time need be very small indeed. If he liked to spend money he could find plenty of ways of doing so;

but with the grant for equipment, the allowances for great coats, travelling allowances, camp allowances, and local subscriptions, the expenses of officers were almost entirely confined to their uniforms and mess bills—in other words, to personal expenses. He believed that the real difficulty in the class from which the supply of officers was expected to come was to be traced to causes which were not always recognised in Debates in the House of Commons. He believed that the idleness and selfishness of young men who might join, and would be all the better for joining, had more to do with it than anything else. Generally, when a young man was asked to join he said he had not time. His (Colonel Brookfield's) experience was that in every department of life the idlest of all men were those who never had the time to do anything, and that those who were very much overworked thought very little of undertaking a little extra work. As to the plea respecting the expenses to which Volunteer officers were put, the young men to whom he referred very likely, if their own appetites were concerned, spent in a day or an hour as much as they would have to spend on the Volunteers in a year. He believed the first inducement that could be held out to such young men was one which had been tentatively mentioned several times by former War Ministers, although when they had been asked whether there was any chance of carrying it out they had always answered that the matter was "receiving their careful consideration." It was not surprising, under these circumstances, that nothing had been done. The inducement he referred to was that of occasionally offering Volunteers a commission in the Line. He thought he could offer what almost amounted to a proof that the adoption of such a course would be effectual. Some 23 years back he served for two or three years in the Militia. When he joined there was almost as great a dearth of subalterns in the Militia as there was in the Volunteers at the present moment. A year or two afterwards every vacancy was filled up, the simple explanation being that the new men were scrambling for a commission in the Regular Army. The commanding officers of Militia battalions complained at first that these young men were only making a convenience of the

Militia; but he hoped they soon became patriotic enough to see that the system was a good one, and that it benefited the whole Service. He urged the Secretary for War to apply a similar system to the Volunteers. He had also to make a proposal—one of a more fanciful character—of his own. The class which included young men who ought to serve in the Volunteers, but would not, also included several hundreds of young men who had been up for examinations for the Line or the Militia and had failed. He could not see why, when candidates went up for these examinations, they should not be asked to answer one interrogation in addition to those to which they were now subjected. He did not see why they should not be asked whether, in the event of passing and having to wait for admission, they would be willing for a certain period to serve Her Majesty in a regimental district, and if so, in what district they could serve. Then they should be given credit for this, and he believed if this was done they would have a large number of young men ready and willing to fill vacant commissions in the Volunteer Force. The key to the situation lay in still further strengthening the good feeling which had happily begun to grow up between the Volunteers and the rest of the Service; and by joining those bonds still more closely together by letting the officer commanding the regimental district from time to time recommend some one from his battalion for a commission in the Line. The other alternative was to go to a different class for the officers, and that was the retired regular Army officers. The necessary personal expenses of an officer were too great to allow non-commissioned officers to take commissions. There were a large number of officers on half pay or who had joined the Reserve who had not half enough to do, and would be very glad to give their service in this direction. It might be remembered that experience had shown that these officers did not always make good commanders of Volunteers. They were too military, and sometimes lacked that tact and exceptional treatment which was necessary in dealing with Volunteers. He did not, therefore, propose to fill up all the vacancies by retired Army officers, but he suggested that they should report themselves to the officer commanding the

Regimental District, who would then have a list of officers available when any Volunteer Battalion or Brigade of Artillery was exceptionally denuded of officers. They could serve either as company officers or assistant adjutants. The objection was that such services would have to be paid for. By either of these plans, or by a judicious combination of the two, the main difficulties he had described would be surmounted. The Volunteer system was based on the assumption that voluntary services would be forthcoming. Great credit was due to the tradesmen and working classes of this country for the loyalty they displayed in joining the ranks of the Volunteers, but it was a standing reproach that the other classes to whom they looked for officers were too indolent to serve, and too wanting in public spirit to recognise the duty which they ought to discharge. He thought that something should be done to stimulate them and make them all take a reasonable share in securing the military defence of the country.

#### SECOND DIVISION CLERKS.

\*MR. B. L. COHEN (Islington, E.) said, he thought he would not need to detain the House more than a short time in bringing under its notice the case of the Second Division Clerks, whose work in his opinion contributed as much to the efficiency of the Army as did that of the most distinguished of Her Majesty's subjects who wore her uniform. He had ventured to intrude on the House because the case he had to submit constituted an injustice to a very meritorious class of public servants and conduced neither to the efficiency nor to the economy of the great Department of State over which the right hon. Gentleman presided. He was told that he could not move the Resolution which stood in his name, but he hoped that before he sat down he would have made out a case which would justify the right hon. Gentleman in giving assurances that the legitimate expectations of the class whose cause he was advocating should no longer be disregarded. Now the 118th paragraph of the Second Report of the Royal Commission on Civil Service Establishments was as follows:—

"The essence of our proposals is to assign a greatly increased share of the work to the

Second Division, and in connection with this object to improve their scale of pay, and to attach to their class certain specified staff appointments for which their experience especially qualifies them. We are disposed to hope that if our proposals are adopted means may be found to apply the whole of them to the existing Second Division Clerks *pari passu* with a corresponding and simultaneous diminution as opportunity offers of the First Division."

That Report was submitted to Parliament in 1888, but the principles of the recommendation had been recognised by the Lords of the Treasury in a letter dated as far back as 1884, in which My Lords wrote—

"Although the number of Second Division Clerks promoted to the First Division must always bear a small proportion to the number not so promoted, it is not necessary that they should be an insignificant proportion of the First Division. On the contrary, My Lords look forward to that division being largely replenished in certain Departments from the best members of the Second Division. It will probably also be necessary to reserve a power of direct appointment to the First Division. But there are many Departments in which this power need not—so far as My Lords can foresee—be exercised habitually or even frequently. Promotion from the Second to the First Division may therefore fairly be considered as a legitimate aspiration for the superior members of the former."

The right hon. Gentleman the Financial Secretary to the Treasury in the late Government stated in this House on the 28th March, 1890, that

"Promotion to the First Division was one of the methods provided under the present scheme for rewarding meritorious Second Division Clerks, and many such promotions have been made in other offices."

The House would thus see that the principle of the Resolution he had desired to bring forward had the authority of the Royal Commission presided over by the right hon. Baronet the Member for the Blackpool Division, of the Lords of the Treasury, and of the Secretary to the Treasury in the late Government. He desired especially to impress upon the House that weight of authority, because he was aware that in proposals such as he was submitting private Members did not frequently get much support from right hon. Gentlemen on both Front Benches. The present, however, was a case which he thought would appeal to the sympathy, at any rate, of private Members on both sides. He had not brought forward the matter with any desire to delay business, nor had his action any suspicion or shred of Party

interest in it, as at a public meeting in connection with the question, held last November, and presided over by the hon. Member for South Islington, there were present Members of the House belonging to all Parties. This question was one which excited a large amount of interest in the House itself, and many hon. Members held there were just grounds of discontent at the legitimate expectations of this deserving class of public servants remaining unsatisfied, to the serious injury of the service. He put a question on this subject, and in reply to it on the 6th of February last the right hon. Gentleman paid a very handsome tribute to the merits of the Second Division Clerks, who were, he said, qualified for any work in the office; but he added that it was necessary to promote men from the outside in order to preserve the necessary gradation of age. But he would like to point out that the age of the Second Division Clerks eligible for promotion ranged from 25 to 30, and as they continued in the service until they attained the age of 65 years, those who would be most likely to be promoted would still have an official future before them of from 30 to 40 years, whilst their whole official career would cover a period of from 40 to 50 years—not a short qualification. Moreover, there was no necessity to promote the elder members of the Second Division, seeing that the Ridley Commission itself strongly enforced the principle of promotion by merit rather than by seniority, so that the gradation of age on which the right hon. Gentleman insisted would not only be in no way prejudiced, but would be promoted by the concession now asked at his hands. The right hon. Gentleman next urged, in his reply to the question of the 6th February, the necessity of reducing the number of clerks in the First Division to 60. This decision, which he believed was promulgated in 1891, naturally caused bitter disappointment to the clerks of the Second Division. How was it to be effected? It was to be done by filling up only one in every four vacancies that occurred. At least, that one might have been given to the Second Division, the clerks in which had a right from what had been promised to expect it. But nothing of that kind was to be done. The House would remember from the answer of the Secretary to the

Treasury to a question put by the hon. Member for the Uxbridge Division, that out of a total of 109 promotions given to the Second Division since September, 1888, only one had been so given in the War Office. And in this connection he would like to add that in the same period the Admiralty, with 229 Second Division clerks, had 17 promotions; the Board of Trade, with 75, had three; the Inland Revenue, with 212, had 50; the Local Government Board, with 66, had five; and the War Office, with 235, a larger number than any other Government Office, had only one. It was not, however, on justice and good faith alone that he based his claim to consideration. The present system, besides being not more—perhaps less—efficient, was also far more costly, as he would prove by illustration. A vacancy occurred in the First Division. A Second Division clerk, drawing £160 a year, might be promoted, and his salary would be increased at once to £200, while his place would be taken by a Second Division clerk at £70. The two posts, therefore, cost the country £270. But if the system were continued of importing outsiders straight into the First Division the new arrival at once entered into an income of £200, whilst the old Second Division clerk retained his £160, and there was a total cost of £360 against one of £270. This was not all, because before many years elapsed—say six—a young man coming into the First Division from outside would, after a period from 18 months to two years, become eligible for a senior clerkship, beginning at £450. That such a promotion should be given to a young man of, say, 27 years of age, while numerous Second Division clerks, deserving and admitted by the right hon. Gentleman to be qualified, were expected to remain on a dead-level scale, and while the conditions under which they entered the Office were being flagrantly violated, could not be described otherwise than as a gross injustice. The right hon. Gentleman had expressed his sympathy with the Second Division clerks in the interview he had given to a deputation which waited upon him some time ago, and he was sure the right hon. Gentleman and the House would appreciate the feelings of those clerks when they saw young men imported from outside, and who had not worked as they had done, almost

immediately placed in a position to draw salaries far in excess of what their services justly entitled them to expect. This did not exhaust all the privileges which these young First Division clerks, of whom there were already 15 in the Office, and more of whom were expected to come in, enjoyed. They received all the private secretaryships, the actuaryships, and the president clerkships, all being posts carrying at least £150 a year, besides salary. They had on the average not more than about eight years' service, and three of them had already been made senior clerks—one at £450, another at £500, and the third at £630. He wished to assure the right hon. Gentleman he had not brought this case under his notice in any spirit of insubordination on the part of the clerks in the Second Division, who were already convinced of his sympathy. He told the deputation which waited on him that the decision to bring in young men from outside had been come to by the high permanent officials without his knowledge. He was aware it was absolutely necessary that a good deal of the direction of Government Departments should be left to the permanent officials, than whom there did not exist a more capable and more devoted body of public servants. But at the same time the fact existed that just expectations had been disappointed, and promises were unfulfilled, and he put it to him whether, when he heard of decisions being taken by the permanent officials which were contrary to expediency and involved grave injustice to a worthy body of public servants, he did not think the time had arrived for the responsible Minister to interfere. He hoped the right hon. Gentleman would be able to give him an assurance that the expectations of the Second Division clerks would no longer be disregarded, and that something more than sympathy would be extended to them. They desired to have something tangible and concrete. The right hon. Gentleman was aware that in some public offices compensation was given where promotion was deferred. The Second Class Clerks did not ask, at any rate at present, for compensation; all they wanted was that their case should be favourably considered, and that they should have something more than that deferred hope which made the heart sick.

#### GOVERNMENT FACTORIES.

SIR J. GORST (Cambridge University): I desire to call the attention of the House to a question raised by my hon. Friend the Member for the Enfield Division of Middlesex, and which was spoken to by the hon. Member for the Bordesley Division of Birmingham—a question touching the interests of those who are employed in Government establishments. After what took place on the subject of wages in Government establishments on Monday night on the Motion to go into Committee of Supply on the Naval Estimates, I should not have ventured to intervene in the Debate on the Army Estimates, if it had not been for events which have happened in succeeding Debates, and which seem to me to be of a somewhat sinister character, and which apparently point to a transformation of the views given expression to on that night. Nothing could have been more satisfactory than the apparent intentions of the Government as expressed in the Debate last Monday night. On their recommendation a Resolution was accepted by the House of Commons and entered upon the Journals of the House which it is true referred only in terms to workmen who are employed in the naval establishments of the country, but in the course of the Debate upon that Resolution the Secretary for War rose, and, speaking on behalf and in the name of the Government, recognised that the Resolution, although in terms confined to persons employed in naval establishments, really embraced in its principle workmen employed in all Departments of State, and amongst others those employed by the War Office. So far as it went that declaration of the right hon. Gentleman and that Resolution were regarded and accepted as eminently satisfactory. It was understood that the Government had recognised their obligations as employers of labour, for they had admitted that there were in the public services some persons employed for inadequate wages, and that where the wages of any particular class of skilled labour in the ordinary trade of the country were higher than the wages paid in Government establishments those latter wages would be reconsidered, and that a satisfactory alteration would take place in them. But since that eminently satisfactory conclusion of the discussion on Monday

night, it has been elicited by a question across the Table by the hon. and gallant Member for the Enfield Division that the Naval Estimates contain no provision whatever for any increase in the pay of the dockyard workmen and others. I presume I may conclude that a similar answer would be given to a question addressed to the Secretary for War as regarded the workmen employed in the arsenals and ordnance factories of the country. When the Government were asked whether any provision had been made in the Supplementary Estimate for the purpose of giving practical effect to the hopes which they had held out to the workmen in the Government Establishments, the Chancellor of the Exchequer replied in the curtest manner—a manner calculated to alarm everybody who was favourable to the idea of a revision of the scales of pay—that no Supplementary Estimate would be introduced for the purpose. In these circumstances I feel that I am justified in asking the Secretary of State for War to explain what the intentions of the Government really are. Is the Resolution passed on Monday night all moonshine? and was the declaration which the Secretary of State for War then made merely a plausible statement intended to pacify those who were interested in the matter? I cannot believe it; but in justice to himself the right hon. Gentleman ought now to tell the House clearly what his intentions are. Another point upon which we should have information is that of one of the most prominent subjects dealt with in the Debate on Monday night—the subject of provision for old age. I understand that in the Department over which the right hon. Gentlemen presides there is to be no provision for old age.

\*MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN : No, no.

SIR J. GORST : I certainly understood him to say so in reply to a question put to him; and I am glad to have elicited that intimation from the right hon. Gentleman, and I would like to hear what is to be the provision for the old age of those employed by the Department. According to the Resolution agreed to on Monday the Government were to set a model to employers throughout the country. Another subject in respect to which the right hon. Gentleman,

if he is still in the same benevolent and philanthropic state of mind as he was in on Monday, ought to give an explanation is this : It appears that the War Office is engaged in discharging workmen from the small arms factories. I have seen myself what misery and distress are caused by such discharges, and I cannot admit that any employer of labour can be a model employer who so arranges matters in his factories as to expose his workmen to sudden and wholesale dismissal. When it is necessary to defend the low rate of pay which is given in Government establishments the stock argument is always adduced that there is a substantial set off to the low wages in the permanency and regularity of the work. That argument can no longer be relied on, having regard to the wholesale discharges of men from Enfield and Sparkbrook. In the case of Sparkbrook the Government have laid themselves open to special condemnation. I acquit the right hon. Gentleman opposite from the charge of having been animated by any political motive in his action, but so clumsy have been the arrangements of the Department that the people who have been discharged from Sparkbrook have every possible ground for believing that political motive had something to do with their dismissal. The newspapers by which the Party of the right hon. Gentleman is so ably supported, cried out for the discharge of men from Sparkbrook before any discharge took place, and it is the fact that a greater number of men have been discharged from Sparkbrook than from Enfield. I do not doubt that the men at Sparkbrook who have been discharged imagine they have lost their situations because they gave their political support to a Dissident Liberal. As I have said, I do not impute political motives to the Secretary of State for War.

THE SECRETARY TO THE ADMIRALTY (SIR U. KAY-SHUTTLEWORTH, Lancashire, Clitheroe) : You have imputed it.

SIR J. GORST : I do not impute it. I must again repeat what I have said twice already, that I do not impute to the Secretary of State for War, nor to the Secretary to the Admiralty, nor to the President of the Board of Trade, the intention of acting from Party motives. What I do affirm is that the arrangements

have been so clumsy that these poor people at Sparkbrook, if they thought that they were discharged on Party grounds, were perfectly justified in forming that opinion. When the journals that support the right hon. Gentleman opposite called for the abolition of the establishment at Sparkbrook, and when the person who represents the Government in Birmingham as the labour correspondent of the Board of Trade is an active political partisan, the workman at Sparkbrook cannot be very greatly blamed if they think that political considerations account to some extent for their discharge. I merely rose to ask the right hon. Gentlemen to give some assurance that this Government mean business and do not mean to stop at promises, and I hope, too, they will be able to show that the discharges of these workmen were due to causes other than those of Party motive.

MR. J. CHAMBERLAIN (Birmingham, W.): I am not, Sir, disposed to grudge the time that has been spent, and willingly spent, in the service of the country, in listening to the later speeches; but they have had unfortunately the effect of interrupting the Debate on the question raised by the right hon. Member for Bordesley. That right hon. Member said truly that the workpeople at Sparkbrook, and at some other gun factories in Birmingham, were his constituents, and perhaps they helped to make up the majority of 4,000 by which my right hon. Friend was returned. In my own constituency there is not a single gunmaker, but I am just as much interested as my right hon. Friend in the prosperity of Birmingham. I do not know to what extent reduction has been made in the contracts given to private manufacturers, but if the demand for small arms is falling off the orders to private manufacturers must in turn be reduced. It may be that at present they are working under contracts, and that until those contracts are exhausted no reductions can be made. I shall not, therefore, attempt to set up any comparison between a private factory and a Government factory; but there is one point on which I would address a word of warning to the Secretary for War. The way in which private factories have been dealt with has been most extravagant and absurd. The cost of small arms from private factories is greater

than their cost at Government factories. It is difficult to tell what is the cost at Government factories; but the policy pursued by successive Governments in dealing with private factories accounts for the greater cost of the rifles they produce. Nothing could be more fatal than to allow the country to depend solely on Government factories. They have been cut down to starvation point, and then, when their services are called for, they are obliged to make the first order pay for all the new machinery that is required, because we cannot trust the Government for anything like a moderate average of work. It has been settled by the vote of the House that private factories should be maintained. But if they are to be kept in existence, the Government ought so to arrange its work as to keep up a steady moderate stream of orders, sufficient to enable them to hold together. But this the Government has not done. The factory at Sparkbrook once belonged to a prosperous private company which was treated badly by the Government. The company could not afford to provide even caretakers for the machinery, and it got out of order. Finally, the factory had to be either broken up or sold to the Government for an old song. Other private manufacturers have learnt a lesson, and they take care that when they have a contract it shall pay them fully for the expenses they have to incur in carrying it out. There is one matter upon which I will venture to make an appeal to the right hon. Gentleman. Although I will not accuse the Secretary for War of penalising Birmingham for its political sins, I am afraid the right hon. Gentleman is inclined to penalise Sparkbrook, because in 1888 he declared his desire to retain it only as a repairing factory, and he appears to be starving it with the view of carrying out that intention.

\*MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: That is not an accurate representation of what I said.

MR. J. CHAMBERLAIN: Yes, that was the ground of the understanding with the House. I have always been against this policy, and when I find a statement made by the right hon. Gentleman, I must come to the conclusion that he is opposed to a manufacturing department at Sparkbrook. When the vote has been reduced by 40 per cent. the output will be reduced by 60 per cent. The factory



is now turning out 500 rifles a week; the vote will reduce the output to 200 a week, and 200 will cost a vast deal more per rifle than 500. It will then be easy to show that Sparkbrook is the most expensive rifle establishment in the world, and that, therefore, it ought to be discontinued. If this be not the intention of the right hon. Gentleman, will he say what his intention is in cutting down Sparkbrook 40 per cent., when he has only cut down Enfield Factory by 25 per cent? The right hon. Gentleman says he was only cutting down Birmingham the same as Enfield, because he coupled with Sparkbrook the Bagot Street repairing shop, which employed another set of workmen, and for which the vote was increased. But Bagot Street has not spent the money voted for it, and it has returned more than the sum now to be added, so that the addition is a mere paper excuse for cutting down Sparkbrook by a purely illusory excess vote for Bagot Street. Even including Bagot Street, the vote for Birmingham is reduced by 31 per cent., which is 6 per cent more than Enfield has been reduced. This is unfair treatment, but it is probably due rather to want of information than to any desire to do injustice as between one factory and another. Still it is believed the right hon. Gentleman wishes to turn Sparkbrook into a repairing factory, and it is desired that this should not be done without the approval of the House. A policy of the kind would involve the sacrifice of valuable machinery which in time of emergency would produce 1,000 rifles a week. It would also deprive the country of the advantage of having a small arms factory in the centre of England. The situation of the Enfield Factory is an extremely bad one. In case of invasion Enfield would be much more liable to be taken by the enemy than a factory in the centre of England. Besides that there is no coalfield near Enfield, and there is one near Sparkbrook. If Sparkbrook were permitted to work on equal terms with Enfield I am sure it could produce rifles at a lower price. Even with the fact that the War Department has favoured Enfield at every turn, Birmingham is enabled, by the Estimates of the Government, to turn out rifles at 2s. 6d. a piece less than the cost at Enfield. I said I should make an appeal to my right hon. Friend. I do

not think it is too late. Certainly this matter will not rest here. We cannot allow this policy of destroying what we believe to be a very valuable addition to the military resources of the country to proceed without the opinion of the House of Commons being expressed on the subject. I am not able to take a vote on it to-night, but I appeal to my right hon. Friend—not asking him for a specific answer now—to take the matter into consideration, and to say, if he finds the facts laid before him bear investigation, that he will raise the amount to be voted for wages at Sparkbrook Factory, and that he will withdraw the orders for the turning away of a very considerable number of workpeople, if necessary, providing for the additional expenditure by means of a further Supplementary Estimate. There is only one other point I would like to bring before my right hon. Friend. If he has the slightest doubt as to the matters to which I have ventured to call his attention, then I would ask him to give us what I have asked for over and over again—a small Committee to inquire into the comparative advantages of the Enfield and Sparkbrook factories. We have been told that Enfield can make more cheaply than Birmingham. We dispute the figures altogether, and we say that if there is any idea of the kind in the minds of the officials of the War Department, it is in the public interest that it should be inquired into. I therefore ask my right hon. Friend to give us such an inquiry.

\*THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (Mr. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN, Stirling, &c.): The fact has again occurred to-day which has occurred on former occasions. The moment we come for a Vote for munitions of war involving in any respect the interests of Birmingham, my right hon. Friend who has just sat down and those near him at once enter the field. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Bordesley immediately lays his coat upon the floor, and invites me to tread upon the tail of it. I have no intention now, nor have I ever had any intention, of taking that course; but an appeal has been made so directly to me to state what the figures in the Estimates mean on this subject that I do not hesitate at once to say what the policy as represented by these figures is. First of all, let me say something as to the reduction which we have found neces-

sary in the amount of wages to be spent. The right hon. Gentleman opposite, the Member for the University, launched a very strong denunciation, and a perfectly proper denunciation, against wholesale discharges, or against any policy which meant the taking on of a large number of workmen and then discharging them afterwards, and he asked me to carry out, as far as I could, continuity of employment, which I referred to the other night as one of the advantages of the Public Service. By continuity of employment was meant employment in all seasons and weather while work lasts, because I was careful to guard myself against implying more than this, knowing that emergencies would sometimes arise in this as in all other businesses. What is the position we are in with regard to the manufacture of small arms, as to which we are told we are pursuing an unfortunate course in reducing the amount of wages? Why, there has been, as the House knows, a most abnormal activity in the production of small arms within the last two or three years. My right hon. Friend, my Predecessor, with great energy, and after the most careful inquiry into the question as to the best form of rifle, determined to furnish Her Majesty's Forces as rapidly as possible with the magazine rifle, superseding that which they now have in their hands. Having determined this, he very properly resolved that no time should be lost in making the substitution, and therefore there has been, as I say, a most unusual pressure and activity not only in these Government employments, but in trade orders. Now we find that so rapid has been the production of rifles that we have come, I will not say within measurable distance, but at any rate within sight of the period when the demand will be fulfilled. That is the weak point or difficulty with regard to such a factory as the Sparkbrook, which deals with small arms. The country is not always wanting a very large supply of small arms. When the arming of the Forces with the magazine rifle has taken place we may look forward with something like certainty to an interval during which the requirements will be limited so the filling up of the waste. It is quite impossible to avoid that spasmodic activity, and the subsequent slackness which the right hon. Gentleman said properly was so in-

jurious. What does the House think? Do they think it would be better for the public, and for the constituencies which are interested, if we took a little more money for this year in order to keep up high pressure this year, and then have a total collapse? No, Sir, we thought it was much better to look ahead, to recognise that there must be a time when this demand would practically cease, and that, therefore, it is necessary that diminution in wages and employment should be as gradually introduced as possible. This is the policy we have had in view, and I submit it with the greatest confidence to the House for their approval; and I hold that I should have been very ill-advised indeed if I had kept up the work at Enfield, or Birmingham, or elsewhere, and the orders to the trade at the old level with the prospect before me of a sudden collapse at no distant period. So much as to the cruelty of taking away or diminishing the wages available for the maintenance of these workmen. But my right hon. Friend who has just sat down complained that in making this diminution we had been unfair to Birmingham. I am glad my right hon. Friend acquitted me of any design against the interests of Birmingham. That has been attributed to me by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Bordesley on previous occasions, and I believe that it has been attributed to me in some newspapers of perhaps not very wide circulation which I have not seen. I disregard such an imputation; of course I am absolutely and entirely free from it, and I know that my right hon. Friend does not believe that I have any such desire or such mean political jealousy with regard to institutions such as those two establishments at Birmingham. But have we done injustice to Birmingham? Let me say something in regard to words of mine, which my right hon. Friend quoted, as to Sparkbrook being a repairing factory. When Sparkbrook was purchased by the Government of which the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham was a Member, that was done for the sole purpose of it being used as a repairing factory. The observations the right hon. Gentleman has quoted of mine were directed simply against the multiplication of Government factories; without special reference to Birmingham at all. But after Sparkbrook had been some time in use, there came an epoch.

when there was a demand for a new weapon, and then this factory, which was purchased, as the House of Commons was informed, simply as a repairing factory, was used as a manufacturing factory for the new rifle. The object of the original purchase explains why I have spoken of it as a repairing factory; but I assure my right hon. Friend that I am aware how good a factory Sparkbrook is, and how well-equipped it is. I agree with a great deal of what he stated, that as we have it now, and as it is so well-equipped, it is an essential thing that it should be maintained in our possession to strengthen our resources in case of necessity. But when he says we have done something to injure Birmingham, let me quote the figures. There is also the Bagot Street factory. The right hon. Gentleman says we are giving too much in wages to Enfield, and too little to Birmingham. What are we giving? Last year we gave to Sparkbrook £60,000; to Bagot Street, £16,000; total, £76,000. This year Sparkbrook has £35,000; and Bagot Street, £22,000; total £57,000. That is, roughly speaking, a reduction of £19,000 between the two. Enfield had last year £160,000, this year £120,000; it therefore loses £40,000, which is almost exactly the same proportion as Birmingham. I say there is no evidence here that a larger number of men in proportion would be deprived of work in Birmingham than would be deprived at Enfield. I have no desire, as I have said, to deal in any way unfairly with Birmingham. I am told that some newspaper had said that I was intending to starve Birmingham. I am not responsible for paragraphs in newspapers, and it is not from that source my opinions must be gathered. Now, the right hon. Gentleman the Member for the University asked me some questions on the general subject of labour. He was not, I think, very kind in the imputations which he disclaimed making. The very disclaimer in itself was almost as injurious as the imputation. He absolves me of having deliberately intended to deceive the House, but he says that we should have brought forward an estimate. How could we put an estimate on the Table when we do not know yet what the sum might be? We have not the slightest idea, and I told him so the other night. We prefer to proceed upon

established and well-known facts, and until we know those facts it is quite impossible to estimate what sum will be required in any one of the Government departments for this purpose. When the inquiry is completed, when we have come to a decision upon it, if we have not enough money in the Estimates, a Supplementary Estimate will naturally be required. Then the right hon. Gentleman asked me why I was opposed to a provision being made for old age. I am very willing that some provision should be made for old-age workmen on a large scale, but what I said was that my opinion is strongly against the principle of establishment of workmen. Defenders and advocates of establishment in Government employment find their great argument in this, that it gives them a hold upon the workmen; but they fail to see that it gives the workmen also a hold upon them. I say that it is very much better both for workman and employer that the matter should be left to free bargain between them, just as in other employments. The hon. Member for Islington brought forward the case of second division clerks. Well, I have great sympathy with the second division clerks generally, and above all with the second division clerks in the War Office, because I believe they have been very unfortunate in the office which they have chosen to go into. The War Office has had for the last 20 or 30 years a plethora of clerks. We have been engaged for years in trying to bring the numbers down. The reason why the second division clerks cannot expect to have promotions into the first division is this, that the reductions made by the retirements given by the Treasury were given on the express stipulation that certain vacancies should be absorbed, and that such as were not absorbed should be filled up by younger men from the outside. I cannot hold out any hope of promotion to the first division at present, but I hope to obtain some promotion for the first grade in the second division, and probably some staff appointments below the upper division. The hon. Member for Sussex spoke on the question of the Volunteers, and made a number of suggestions, for which I am much obliged to him, and which I promise him shall receive careful consideration. He made some suggestions which I think deserve special notice. He proposed that we

should induce officers to serve in the Volunteers by a special arrangement. I regret the dearth of officers in the Volunteers, and I should be glad to jump at any proposal made which is calculated to improve matters in that respect. But the hon. Member suggests that we should give commissions in the Line. I am afraid I must ask what are these among so many? An occasional commission such as could be given in the Line would be very small inducement considering the hundreds of Volunteer officers. I find very great difficulty in contemplating the idea of multiplying those outside accessions to commissions in the Army. When you consider the elaborate system we have of competitive examination, and the great expense to which parents are put in preparing their sons for those competitive examinations, I think it would be a great hardship upon them if the number of commissions given in that way were greatly reduced, and if commissions were given to young men simply because they had held a commission in the Volunteers. The hon. Gentleman asked me about the brigadier and his anomalous position. I assure the hon. Member that I am fully alive to that fact. One of the first inquiries I made when I came to the War Office was with the view of endeavouring to make out what this amphibious officer exactly has to do and what his powers are. I am still prosecuting that inquiry. As to what the hon. Member said regarding commanding officers not being under the Mutiny Act, and the meetings of cops and enforced attendance, all those things I will consider. They have a good deal in them to commend them. I am not, however, prepared to give an opinion upon them, nor am I quite sure that public opinion would bear us out if we attempted to alter the law as to the obligations of service of Volunteers. It is a delicate thing to make any alteration in that respect. Now I come to a more lively subject, upon which perhaps the House will allow me to make a statement that will satisfy very natural curiosity. The hon. Member for Tradeston brought forward the vexed question of the Cameron Highlanders, and in my double capacity as a Scotchman and Secretary of State for War I am exceedingly interested in that question. As much has been said on the subject I think it is right that the plain

facts regarding it should be told. Now the first plain fact is that we have far too many Scotch regiments, that there are more regiments in Scotland—and, unfortunately, nearly all of them historic regiments, that we do not wish to meddle with if we can avoid doing so—than Scotland can support. And if that is true of Scotland at large, it is still more true of the nominally Highland regiments, because for various reasons they are exceedingly difficult to keep in full efficiency. We have nine kilted battalions. It was known in 1881, when this matter was being settled, that there would be this difficulty, and the proposal originally made, which I deeply regret was not adopted, was that in face of the difficulty of maintaining those kilted regiments a Highland brigade should be formed, comprising four or six battalions—I believe myself that four would have been sufficient—and that these should be clothed in a tartan selected by the Queen herself, so as to give no offence to anyone, and that brigade would have combined all the traditions and preserved the distinctive glories of the Highland regiments. That would have been a workable, intelligible, and efficient solution of the difficulty. But then there was an outcry created to the effect that we must not interfere with any tartan, not a kilt must be lost, not a tartan meddled with. I will not go so far as a distinguished and gallant General, who, when speaking on the subject ten years ago in this House—himself a Scotchman and a member of a great clan—said that he had never yet seen in Scotland a Scotchman wearing a kilt unless he was paid to do so by an Englishman. I do not go so far as that, and I admit at once the picturesqueness and the military effectiveness of the Highland dress; but when we are told that not a tartan is to be meddled with we naturally ask what these tartans are, and we find that it is difficult to determine. I will state one fact which will show the House what I mean. The Cameron Highlanders themselves, the very regiment we hear so much of, wear a spurious Macdonald tartan, and not a Cameron tartan at all. My experience is that the enthusiasm on this subject—what I should call spurious enthusiasm—in favour of the tartans and kilts, although very vivid and active in the large towns and in Piccadilly and

the Strand, does not exist to the same extent among the glens and islands of the Highlands themselves. It is small among the crofters and farmers of the Highlands, but large among the shooting tenants and gillies and that class of people. What was the consequence of this outcry in 1881—an outcry created and carried on, let me say, by the very people who have been at the head of the present outcry? The scheme which I have indicated was upset and the regiments were linked. Some that had not been in kilts at all were put into kilts, and in the end the unfortunate Cameron Highlanders regiment was stranded by itself without any affiliated battalion at all, with a special district assigned to it. It is rather an odd thing that the very same people to whose outcry it is due that the Cameron Highlanders are in this precarious position, are now calling out that on no account must the regiment be meddled with or destroyed. I have said that Scotland cannot maintain so many regiments as it has; and what are the facts about recruiting? I happened the other day to see a statement of the number of recruits obtained for a very distinguished regiment that has for its district the whole of Ross-shire, Sutherland, and Caithness, and the north of Scotland, namely, the Seaforth Highlanders. In the last four years the numbers of recruits that regiment obtained in the district were 72, 73, 90, and 56. Those were all the recruits obtained for the two battalions of this regiment. One hon. Member has asked, why not open Glasgow to the Cameron Highlanders? Open Glasgow, it is said, and we shall see what we shall see. Well, what are the facts regarding recruiting in Glasgow? Glasgow is supposed to be an inexhaustible cistern out of which any amount of recruits, especially Highland recruits, can be drawn. Glasgow is presently recruiting for the following corps: 1st Life Guards, the Royal Horse Guards, the Royal Artillery, the Engineers, the 5th Dragoon Guards—(and here let me say, I should be sorry indeed that these great branches of the Service had no Scotchmen among them, and native Scotchmen)—the 18th Hussars, the Scots Guards, the Royal Scots Fusiliers (a most distinguished regiment), the King's Own Scottish Borderers, the Scottish Rifles (Cameron-

nians) and some other regiments—all these are recruited in Glasgow.

\*MR. HOZIER: The Scottish Rifles are only open to Militiamen.

MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: That is so, the Scottish Rifles recruit only from their own Militia. The other Highland Regiments at this moment do not require recruits, but when they do Glasgow is the first place open to them. Whenever the Cameron Highlanders want any number of men Glasgow is at once open to them, and, notwithstanding what the hon. Member (Mr. Hozier) has said, any man on joining the Army, who expresses a desire to go into a certain regiment is always allowed to go into that regiment if there is room in the regiment for him. Let us see what the result of recruiting was as to Scotland generally. The number of recruits required for the Scotch regiments is 2,689 per year. In 1891 the total number of Infantry recruits obtained was 2,159, and last year—a year of exceptional recruiting—2,682, just seven short of the whole number required. Last year was, as I have said, an exceptional year for recruiting, and Glasgow is considered to be an inexhaustible reservoir for recruiting. Of the total number of recruits only 751 came from Glasgow for all the corps I have named. I think that is a sufficient answer to the proposal that Glasgow should be opened with a view to saving the Cameron Highlanders. As to the Cameron Highlanders themselves, between 1st August, 1891, and 26th November, 1892, no less than 936 recruits had to be raised. It was going abroad, and therefore a large depot had to be raised on purpose. Nine hundred and thirty-six recruits were required. Every effort was made to obtain them in its district, but there only 20 recruits were obtained out of the 936. From Glasgow 57 were obtained; head-quarters recruits (one regiment happened then to be in Edinburgh) 137; other parts of Scotland 152; total Scotch recruits, 366 out of 936. The remaining 570 were obtained in England, a large portion of them coming from the East of London. These are facts which I commend to those who say that Glasgow should be opened, so that a second battalion could be raised for the Cameron Highlanders. There is not the material to keep your first battalion in proper

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efficiency. I have not a word to say in derogation of the Cameron Highlanders. On the contrary, as to its present condition, I believe it to be an excellent battalion, in excellent order, and I cannot pay too high a tribute to the way in which the colonel and officers have behaved in this very trying period. I know, as a matter of fact, they have done their best to put down the outcry which has been made, and to check those who, from very foolish ideas of what were their interests, were endeavouring to create an agitation on the subject. They are a most excellent battalion. I believe also they themselves have no hope of being able to raise a second battalion, and very little hope of being able to maintain themselves. What position are they in? This is a single battalion; and the result is that when it is at home it is no use to us in furnishing drafts for India, and again, when it is abroad we have to raise a special costly *dépôt* to maintain it in existence. It is the most expensive thing we could have, and the only justification we could have for contemplating maintaining it as it is would be the fact that there was a strong local attachment and strong national feeling in favour of it. I do not see evidence of any feeling to that extent. I share that feeling myself, and I would do anything I could to maintain and even improve the position of this illustrious regiment with its great traditions. But I must say that in its present position—which is due to the outcry ten years ago of which I have spoken—it is impossible to justify its existence, and therefore it was I did think, if it was absorbed in the Scots Guards, this would be a dignified conclusion to a great career, and I am ready to maintain that opinion. I am sorry to say I come now to a very lame conclusion, because what I am going to do with regard to this regiment is precisely the very worst thing, and the very thing of all others I should like to avoid, that is to leave it alone for the present, in its precarious and forlorn position; with the positive certainty of meeting, sooner or later, that destiny of absorption which cannot be indefinitely postponed. My right hon. Friend opposite (Sir James Fergusson), the Member for Manchester, has urged upon me the employment of soldiers in Civil Departments, and he could not find anyone more likely to give a cordial response to that

itation. I entirely agree with him.

that we must not be too sanguine or have too large ideas. We cannot imitate foreign countries in promising employment for every retired soldier, because we have not got State employment to offer. Where they have all the railways, and a great many other enterprises, in the hands of the State, they can find an infinite number of posts in which soldiers can serve. But we can only do two things. First of all, we have to see that they are employed in our Public Departments, so far as there is room for their employment; and, in the second place, we have to endeavour to induce and persuade private employers all through the country to give them employment. With regard to Public Departments, I was astonished, and a little indignant, to hear the noble Lord the Member for West Edinburgh (Viscount Wolmer) the other night, talking of the employment of soldiers, say that we could not expect very great things as long as valets and butlers were appointed to messengerships in Public Offices. The noble Lord, I think, ought not to have said that if he did not know that it was the case. All I can say is that, so far as the Admiralty and the War Office are concerned, I will let him have the Returns for the last 10 years of the men who have been appointed to these positions, and he will not find a valet or butler among them. My hon. and gallant Friend the Member for Fareham made a number of useful suggestions, as he always does, and there is no one from whom I would take suggestions more readily. I can assure him that everything he has said shall be remembered. And now, lastly, I come to one comparatively small point. The hon. Member for Basingstoke brought forward a case of a warder, which, I think, I may dispose of in one sentence. The man has had a most unfortunate career. He was not long enough in a military capacity to earn a pension, and the civil office which he thereupon held did not carry a pension with it. It is quite true his commanding officer, or superior officer, appears to have said something to him about retiring on a pension—that is, any pension he was entitled to. Apparently, the officer did not know the man was entitled to no pension. As the hon. Member knows, we are bound in these matters by strict regulations, and it is quite impossible for us, however benevo-

lently inclined we may be, to give a pension where, under the Rules, a pension does not exist. However, I will say that if any loophole can be discovered whereby this man can be benefited, I shall be only too glad to make use of it. I think I have answered most of the points raised, and I trust now, Sir, there will be no objection to your leaving the Chair.

**MR. A. J. BALFOUR:** I need not say that I am not going to make a speech on the subject, nor can I complain of the excellent and full statement made by the right hon. Gentleman, but I would, in the very exceptional circumstances under which the House has met, make an appeal to the Prime Minister to give some statement with regard to the course of business this evening which might relieve our minds. As he is aware, there are very grave objections, into which I will not go at the present time, both to the right hon. Gentleman making his statement at this time of night, and to asking us to discuss that statement after it is made; and I am convinced that it would very greatly conduce to the smooth working of Public Business if the right hon. Gentleman would now assure the House that he would be content with the Speaker leaving the Chair, deferring to a more convenient opportunity the discussion upon the statement which is to follow.

**MR. W. E. GLADSTONE:** I will not enter into any dispute with the right hon. Gentleman as to the statement he has made. At the same time, I do not wish to make any extravagant demand upon the patience of the House, which has been taxed to an extreme degree during the present week. I do not agree that we should be content with the Speaker leaving the Chair; but if, after my right hon. Friend has made his statement, hon. Gentlemen are not disposed to allow discussion to go forward, we should not then, I think, offer resistance.

Question, "That Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair," put, and agreed to.

SUPPLY—considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

ARMY ESTIMATES, 1893-4.

DEPARTMENTAL STATEMENT.

Vote for 154,442 of all ranks.

\***MR. CAMPBELL BANNERMAN:** Sir, in moving this Vote, I would

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ask the indulgence of the Committee while I make a statement, which I hope will not be a very long one, as to the present condition of the Army, and as to the measures which have either been adopted, or are in contemplation regarding it. I have long had, as the House knows, some familiarity with these military affairs. I have often concerned myself in Military Debates in this House during the last 17 years, but so many great changes have been introduced of late years, that I feel almost obliged to ask for that plea of indulgence which the House is accustomed to give to one undertaking novel duties on a novel subject. I will say at once that I have no great changes to lay before the Committee. My wish has been rather to do the best I could with the materials at my disposal than to introduce reforms other than those which appeared to be absolutely necessary. Of late years much has been done. The right hon. Gentleman opposite, my Predecessor, has laboured with assiduity and with enlightened ability; he has been surrounded and assisted by officers of unusual distinction and ability; and his work has not been fruitless. Immense advance has been made within the last two or three years, if not perfection attained, which we can hardly ever hope to attain. In the great questions of Imperial defence, the fortification of our shores, in the protection of our foreign possessions, in the housing of our troops, and in the supply of armaments and munitions of war, both large and small, great progress has been made under the right hon. Gentleman of late years. He has also introduced great changes in the administration of the Army, as to which opinions differ, and as to which, in my view, we are not yet quite able to judge. But as to the Army, its general principles and its organization remain unaltered. The systems introduced more than 20 years ago—short service, localization, and the combination of battalions—have stood the test of time, as is shown by the recent Report of the Wantage Committee, which, while suggesting many changes and improvements, practically approved of those three great systems as being those best adapted to our needs, which are varied beyond the experience of any other Army in the world. We have, in the first place, to garrison India, we have to defend the Colonies, we have to make our own shores safe, and we must be

ready for small wars if they arise ; and it appears that the present terms of service and the organization answer well in the main for these purposes. What we want in this country, in the terms of service and in our organization especially, is elasticity and adaptability, and I believe we obtain this to the necessary degree by the present arrangement. I am quite aware that theorists object to our organization, and particularly to the terms of service ; but, after all, there is nothing so easy as to theorize in these matters. I could easily be a theorist, and could invent an Army which would answer most of our purposes possibly even better and be cheaper than the Army which we have ; but we cannot set aside in this country ancient traditions, prepossessions, prejudices, associations, and vested interests, and if these are taken into account I question very much whether any theory, in fact I can say positively that no theory I have ever seen, could, if applied to those circumstances, have obtained the results we have obtained. Every alternative I have ever seen proposed, however ingenious it might be, has upon examination been either more costly or less suitable to our wants. If that is so, what ought we to do in the present position of matters in this country ? In my opinion, the best policy of a Minister for War is to give fair play to our system, and, having done that, to leave it alone ; distinctly I say to leave it alone—that is, the organisation of the Infantry especially, which is the main matter. I have said it was 20 years since the present system was inaugurated, and I cannot but go back, not only with respect and gratitude, but with some degree of surprise, to that time when almost every great branch of our present system was inaugurated by one man—namely, by Lord Cardwell. In the course of three or four years Lord Cardwell consolidated the administration of the Army at home, abolished purchase, introduced short service and the Reserve, localised the Army, united the control of the Regular Forces and of the Auxiliary Forces, and organised the Infantry. In order to carry those great reforms, he faced immense, honourable but very stubborn, prejudice and a great deal of obloquy, which perhaps still remains in some minds ; but I think the catalogue I have named of achievements in Army reform is such as no Army

reformer, in this country at all events, has ever produced, or is ever likely to produce again. Many things have fought against the development of that system. There is nothing so pernicious to the Army as perpetual change, perpetual oscillation both of theory and of practice. I say give fair play to our present organisation, and the one thing essential for that purpose seems to be the equalisation of the battalions at home and abroad. The system introduced 20 years ago has never had fair play, because the battalions have never been equalised. If you have some regiments with both battalions abroad, not only have you an immense cost, and a great pressure for drafts which would otherwise be avoided, but you fail to realise what is a very considerable advantage of the system, according to which the battalion going abroad would leave behind all its men who were either too young or too near the end of their service, or on other grounds unfit, and on arriving in India or the Colony would find the men who, having some time yet to serve, had been left behind by the sister battalion. This would facilitate relief and reduce cost. If equalisation of battalions were effected, I should be prepared to leave things very much alone. Frequent changes may be beneficial, but, even when beneficial, they often have an unfortunate and an injurious effect upon the Army generally, and I hold that it is desirable to avoid them. I am quite aware that view will be distasteful both to reformers and to reactionaries—to those who wish to go forward and to those who wish to go back—but I consider it certainly the best for the Service in the circumstances of the case. Now, Sir, how is this equalisation of battalions to be effected ? At the present time there are 11 more battalions abroad than at home, and this difference has existed, with the exception of a few years, to a greater or lesser degree, ever since the system was introduced. There are three alternatives before you. You can add to the number of battalions at home ; you may substitute, for certain battalions on foreign service, battalions outside of the linked Infantry organisation ; or you may bring home a sufficient number of battalions. The first suggestion—namely, to add to the number of home battalions, is open to the serious objection of the great expense it would involve. The cost of



an Infantry battalion may be put, roughly, at £40,000, and until it is proved that we are deficient in the numbers of the Army, or that we require more battalions, I am not disposed to recommend any plan which would involve the mere addition to battalions at home, at a cost of £40,000 each. The second method is to substitute, for the ordinary linked Infantry battalion, a battalion of the Guards, and that is an alternative which may well be adopted to some extent, so far as it can be properly used. But, after all, the easiest and readiest way is to bring battalions home from abroad. I am quite aware that, in the case of India, there is much objection, and I would not propose, under any circumstances, to reduce the number of troops there by a single man; but it is a matter for consideration whether we might not ask the Indian Government to dispense with some battalions, giving, as an equivalent, an additional strength to the battalions that are left. This third method of bringing battalions home is that which I shall partially adopt. We propose to bring home a battalion from Gibraltar. Our original intention was to bring home one battalion from Egypt and to substitute for another battalion in Egypt a battalion of the Guards. And we also intend to bring home one battalion from India. That would reduce the number to one pair of battalions abroad which could, for the present, be treated as temporarily employed abroad. Practical equality would thus be restored as far as working is concerned. Recent events in Egypt, however, leading to the increase of the number of troops in that country, have prevented the realisation of our plans in that direction. But in ordinary times, and when any temporary necessity is over and past, it is a thing which can be done. I certainly do believe that, of all the changes that can be made at the present moment—of all the recommendations of the Wantage Committee, as to which we have heard so much—there is nothing which can be done which will so greatly increase the efficiency of the Army as this equalisation of battalions. I have little to say with regard to another branch of the Service—the Cavalry. There is room for some reorganization, and I have listened to what has fallen from the hon. and gallant Member for the Fareham Division. But the only step which I have taken is this, to allow recruits to be enlisted, not

for individual regiments, but for special branches of the Cavalry. They will be enlisted in future for Lancers, Hussars, or Dragoons, as the case may be. Those men will be interchangeable between the different regiments. When regiments have to go abroad it will not be necessary to call for volunteers. That, it seems to me, is a sensible step towards the better organisation of the Cavalry, and will have the advantage of giving greater facilities for sending regiments abroad.

VISCOUNT WOLMER (Edinburgh, W.): What about foreign service?

MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: I will give all the details at my disposal. The other night we heard a good deal said about Army Corps, with regard to the maintenance at home of two Army Corps in readiness for foreign service. As a matter of fact, we have quite recently resolved to give up, for purposes of foreign service, the Army Corps system. The force which is held in readiness for immediate embarkation is no longer the First Army Corps and line of communication troops, but a specially constituted force, which may be roughly described as an Infantry Division, a Cavalry Brigade, a Mounted Infantry Battalion, two Batteries of Horse Artillery, three Batteries of Field Artillery, and a large number of special troops, such as bridging and telegraph troops, balloon section, bakery column, and so forth. The force has been constituted with a special view to the probable requirements of one of our small wars, and its strength is, roughly, 20,000 men and 8,700 horses. With the exception of some small details, the stores for this force—so far as we can decide upon them while the country in which it is to operate is unknown—are ready in their assigned places. Assuming that the Reservists were called out and the registered horses called up, this Field Force, as it is termed, would be ready to embark as soon as—in fact, sooner than—the ships would be ready to receive it. This is, of course, subject to any exceptional preparations which might be required in view of the nature of the country to which it has to go. With regard to one phrase I have just used, let me say this, one want in our system—a decided weakness in our system—is the provision required for small wars. That is to say, some facility, which is required for filling up and strengthening

the battalions required for a small war by utilising, in some way or other, the Reserve. But a small war is not a great national emergency. I have continued the examination which the right hon. Gentleman commenced, and I hope soon we shall have the power of using, for the purpose I have indicated, a small number of the Reserve. When that is done, I hope we shall have accomplished a great object in the way of efficiency. The most conspicuous feature in the military position at this time is the great success which has attended recruiting during the past year, and which appears likely to continue. A full account of this is given in the Report of the Inspector General. The recruits for the year numbered 41,659. Undoubtedly the circumstances have been favourable, and General Feilding has availed himself of the good opportunity thus afforded to him. He has displayed the greatest energy, and has personally visited a large number of recruiting districts. The large number of recruits is due to his zeal and activity, and we are much indebted to him for the flourishing condition of the Services. We have been able gradually to impose checks on special enlistments, and finally, in last month, to dispense with them altogether both in Cavalry and Infantry. The standard of the Guards has been raised to 5ft. 9in.; that of Artillery gunners to 5ft. 6½in.; and that of Artillery drivers from 5ft. 3in. to 5ft. 4in. While speaking of recruiting, let me just notice, in passing, a statement which was made by the hon. Member for Belfast with regard to the condition of St. George's Barracks recruiting station. He said it was in a lamentable condition. I do not think he was quite candid in his remarks. He referred to an official whom he saw at the War Office, whom he found ignorant of the facts, and who went to inspect the station. It was rather to be inferred from the hon. Member's remarks that he was referring to some military officer with a direct responsibility in the matter; whereas the official in question was Sir Ralph Thompson, the Under Secretary of State for War, no part of whose duty it was to visit any recruiting station. But he did go; and he says that he did not find things so bad as reported. I wish to say this: The building is not in a very satisfactory condition—not such a condition as we should like to see it in—but we are always in exp

the National Gallery will take from us some of the ground. While we are in this position of uncertainty, it would not be good policy on our part to spend money in making any large improvements. But, the National Gallery having an intention of encroaching upon us, we are negotiating for ground elsewhere in London. With regard to the special recruits, let me state to the Committee only one or two figures. Of special recruits enlisted during the first half of 1892, who were under the proper standard either in height, chest measurement, or weight, or a combination of these, 2,362 were in Infantry battalions, and on January 1, 1893, there were only 848 out of that number who were still suffering from those deficiencies. This shows that, although much is said against those special enlistments—and we are trying to avoid them where we can—yet, if those recruits are likely young men, they may, under the influence of good food and a steady life, be improved in points in which they were originally deficient. Now, as I have said, elasticity is one of the objects that we seek to attain, and I have myself always been most strongly impressed with the necessity, in regard to the terms of enlistment, that a young man should not have the feeling of being kept a prisoner, as it were, in an occupation which he has come to dislike. If he is under strong temptation to leave the Service, if he is a well-conducted man, I see no reason why he should not be allowed, within reasonable limits, to do so; and, accordingly, we have not only allowed, but encouraged men to pass to the Reserve if they were sufficiently trained men and of good character, when they have been able to show that their parents were in want of their assistance at home, and that they had some certain prospect of employment when they got there. I can conceive nothing more unfortunate for the Army than that a man in that condition should be held to his bargain when his interest and his duty to his own family strongly pull in the other direction. Another feature which has had a great effect on the Army consists of late in the fact of men, on being discharged, going on, in some way or other, as soldiers. This is a very interesting feature.

which has been introduced into all the establishments of the Army. The work carried on by Colonel Burnett, under the energetic stimulus of Sir E. Wood, at Aldershot has spread all over the country; and if any hon. Member will visit, as I have done, a somewhat remote dépôt, and see the stock-pot and the other novel culinary implements, and the nature of the food produced, he will get some idea of the great step forward we have taken in this respect. I was told the other day that, so excellent is our system of cooking at Aldershot, that, although hon. Members will hardly believe it, actually the French Army have sent over one or two of their experienced men, in order—I will not say to learn cooking from us, but, at all events, to inspect the new system which has been adopted. It is not enough, however, to obtain recruits; we want to know how they behave, and I am glad to say that, on the whole, the Returns regarding their conduct are satisfactory. I find that the proportion of Courts Martial per 1,000, which was 91 in 1881, had fallen to 53 in 1891. The proportion of minor punishments had fallen from 1,240 to 1,038; the total number of trials for drunkenness on and off duty from 4,808 to 2,078; the total number of trials for desertion and absence without leave from 4,890 to 3,402. These are the Returns for 1891, more recent figures not being yet available, but I believe the improvement is still going on. Generally speaking, as regards the military prisons, one-third of the accommodation is unoccupied, and, owing to the decrease in the required occupation during the last few years, it has been possible to reduce the accommodation at Brixton Prison from 493 to 150. That, I think, is most satisfactory. Then I come to another not less important point, and that is the health of the Army. During 1892 the health of the troops in the United Kingdom has been generally satisfactory. The approximate ratio of admissions into hospital—772·8—is practically the same as the previous year. The death-rate—4·30 per 1,000—shows a slight decrease. There were no special outbreaks of disease. The health of the troops abroad has been generally good. There are some exceptions; for instance, there has been a good deal of disease, owing to a particular circumstance, at Alexandria, but, on the whole,

there has been a general decrease in the death-rate. That being the condition of things, a question with which I might now be expected to deal is this—whether anything more must be done on a large scale for our soldiers. I had the opportunity the other day of making a few observations on the various improvements recommended by the Wantage Committee, and I do not know that I need go over the same ground again. One thing we have been able to do is to alter the pay of lance-corporals. Up to the present time the number of lance-corporals who have received extra pay, in addition to that of private, has been somewhat less than half the total who held the lance rank. Strong representations were made to Lord Wantage's Committee that this increased very much the difficulty of finding suitable men to accept the promotion. Arrangements are being made to redistribute the pay, and, in the case of the Infantry, to increase it, and in future, practically all the lance-corporals in the Artillery, Engineers, and Cavalry will receive pay, but at a reduced rate; in the Infantry nearly all will receive the full rate of pay as lance-corporal. The rates of lance pay throughout the Army will thus be more uniform, and in almost every case the men will receive pay. Another recommendation which my predecessor had accepted before I came into office, but left over for my consideration, is that with reference to clothing. Throughout the Army the date of issue of clothing will cease to be April 1. A soldier will receive his outfit on enlistment, and his annual refit as nearly as possible on the anniversary of his enlistment. The clothing will cease to be the property of the State in the sense that a man will be allowed to dispose of it when worn for the due time on his discharge to a comrade. He will also receive compensation for any garments he may not require when the anniversary of issues recurs; but he will still remain liable to provide any clothing which his commanding officer may order to be renewed between the regular dates of issue. Those are the main principles, and I cannot but believe they will lead greatly to the comfort and contentment of the soldier, although it throws a certain amount of expense upon the Public Exchequer. So much for the soldier. Is there anything to be done for the

officers? Sometimes in this House, speaking from the other side, I have perhaps been a little hard on what are called the grievances of the purchase officers. Still, I have a great sympathy for anyone who thinks he has a grievance. The grievances of the purchase officers have been examined by my predecessor, and I can hold out no hope of any revision of his decisions. But there is one matter which is a grievance, not so much to the officer, as to the interest of the Service, which is perhaps more important. When a colonel completes the command of a regiment he has two courses before him. He may retire, receiving a handsome retiring allowance, or he may go upon a sort of suspensory list—a purgatorial list, if I may use the phrase—in the expectation of possible employment; and while on that list the penalty of his purgatory is increased by the fact that he only receives £200 a year. There are, however, many officers not very rich in this world's goods who cannot undertake to hang on with £200 a year, waiting for the chance of appointment. They may be the very best men for the Service; but just at a time of life when many expenses come upon them, the choice presented to them is a very difficult one. We have thought it desirable to make some addition to the pay of those officers in their period of suspended animation, and that, I think, will be a very great assistance to the authorities, because it will give them a greater choice for subsequent promotion. Let me say one word in all sincerity on the conduct of the officers of the Army, who, I sometimes think, do not receive all the credit they deserve. We all know what changes have come upon them, how enormously increased their duties have been since that period of new reform to which I alluded in the beginning of my remarks. I believe they are more zealous, better instructed, more hard-working and devoted to their duty than at any previous period in the history of the Army, while at the same time they have lost not one whit of the old and simpler military virtues of courage, endurance and discipline, which have always given the British officer, when tried by emergency, the power that belongs to a leader of men. I am not done with the Army yet, because I have to say something of the Reserve. The Reserve is also in a flourishing condition.

There are over 77,000 men, to be increased next year to 80,000. I remember in 1872 and 1873 that 80,000 was the staple figure always quoted in the House, and received with sneers and derision by the opponents of short service. Eighty thousand was the figure always spoken of as the greatest height dreamt of by Army reformers; but here we have attained that figure, and it marks an epoch. We have so many men that we have stopped enrolling in the Supplementary Reserve, for the reason that the Supplementary Reserve was originally instituted to fill an emergency, to fill any deficiency caused by an accidental falling-off in the number of the Reserve; and it seems to me unnecessary to continue enrolling men in the Supplementary Reserve when we have a prospect of 80,000 men, which is really a full Reserve. Turning to the Auxiliary Forces, I find they are in a very similar condition. Taking them in the order of precedence, I am sure that the Committee will be gratified to observe that the recruiting for the Militia was much more satisfactory in 1892-93 than in 1891-92. The number in 1892 was no less than 8,991 in excess of the men who joined in the previous year, the Militia total being 108,288 as against 102,032 in the previous year. Thirteen battalions have been brigaded in camp at Aldershot, of which 10 were brigaded for the first time, a course of training calculated greatly to improve their efficiency. Steps have been taken to train the Militia Artillery at the works which they would man on mobilisation. With regard to the Yeomanry, for a considerable period I have looked upon this Force as not in a very defensible or satisfactory condition. There has been a reduction of establishment of 2,093 officers, non-commissioned officers, and men for 1893. But the changes advised in the Report of the Yeomanry Committee have been embodied in an Army Order, and I have every reason to believe will work well, and will greatly increase the efficiency of the Force. The most important change is the alteration from the troop to the squadron system and the brigading of regiments, thus making a reduction in the number of adjutants and in the permanent Staff, the saving thus effected going back to the regiment in an increased grant. I stand here in a somewhat peculiar position, because I

have always persistently and without any hesitation voted against the Yeomanry Vote on every occasion when anyone moved a reduction of it; and I voted against it because I regarded the force as so weakly organised that it really could not be any great increase to the defensive strength of the country. Now we have done something to give it, as it were, a last chance. I hope it may not be the last one; at all events, we give it a chance of greater efficiency and of becoming less an amusement and more a real business occupation to those engaged in it. Let us hope that the effect will be satisfactory, and that, when I am free again to vote as I please, I shall not have any occasion to repeat those votes of the past. Now I come to the Volunteers. The Returns received regarding the Volunteer Force are highly satisfactory. The following increases are reported during 1892:—Establishment, 775; efficient (higher grade), 3,161; total enrolled, 3,377; present at inspection, 4,892; proficient (sergeants), 119. There has been a decrease of efficient (lower grade) 56; proficient officers, 46. A large increase of corps attending brigade camps is shown, no fewer than 96 battalions attending. In August a Force of 15,900 Volunteers was mobilised at Aldershot, and the Reports of the general officer commanding on the conduct and soldier-like bearing of the Force were highly complimentary. The Volunteer Artillery are well reported on. There are now 90 batteries of position, equal to 362 guns, in the hands of Volunteer Artillery. Fifteen corps are wholly position artillery and 26 are mixed corps—that is, batteries of position and garrison batteries. We propose to increase these batteries to 99. Any additional batteries will be armed with 40-pounder guns; the other guns are 16- and 20-pounders. The importance of training our Volunteers at the guns and fortresses they are told off to on mobilisation is very great, and last year 6,000 Volunteers were drilled at works of defence. The dearth of officers is almost the only unsatisfactory feature I have to report. I have spoken a word or two on the subject to-night already. It is hoped that the inducements we are offering may have some effect. It is hoped that the issue of the Volunteer officers' decoration and the more intimate relations in

which the Force has been brought with the Army by the success of brigade camps may do something to obtain officers. The giving of the Volunteer decoration which was, in the first place, a recognition of good service, was expected to offer some inducement to officers to continue in the Service in order to earn it. I may say with regard to this, that although it has been so recently given—though I do not mean to suggest any new departure, yet the question of giving some sort of decoration to the non-commissioned officers has been brought before me. Without committing myself to any course at present, I frankly say that it commends itself to me, as far as I see, as a desirable thing, because everyone who knows the Volunteers is aware that the non-commissioned officers really do a great deal of the hardest work in keeping the corps efficient. One little concession I have been induced to make, or am anxious to make, affects what is known as the united drill allowance. This allowance was given to meet travelling expenses of corps with scattered companies to enable them to attend battalion drills, inspection, &c.; but it was not given when a camp was held, as it was supposed a camp afforded the opportunity for battalion drill. The allowance was 5s. a head. In 1889 the allowance was thus modified:—For one attendance at battalion drill 2d. per mile per man for the journey to and fro; for one attendance at inspection the same. But there was an embargo on it as to camp. This embargo has been found detrimental to the promotion of brigade camps in many parts of the country, as it is financially better for a corps to draw the travelling allowance and to forego the camp allowances (with the camp expenses). I now hope to be able to arrange that travelling allowances shall be given to corps which have attended brigade camps. Now, I do not wish to detain the Committee too long. I have said all I need say as to *personnel*, and I now come to *matériel*, both works and munitions of war. In both of these Departments great progress has been made. Let me first speak of the present position and progress of the two great undertakings outside the Estimates that were initiated by my predecessor for Imperial defence and for the housing of our soldiers respectively. As regards the Imperial Defence Loan, the defence works of the

military ports at home and abroad are now very near completion. The works at the coaling stations are practically complete at all but four stations; at three of which they are very nearly complete. There have been difficulties in respect of the fourth (Esquimaux), with regard to which we have heard something in this House already, as to the apportionment of charge between the Imperial Government and the Dominion Government. These difficulties are now, it is believed, surmounted, and the works will shortly be proceeded with. I am glad to say that the Canadian Government have made a most reasonable offer recently to bear a very fair share of this work. Their offer has been accepted, and the matter is now in course of settlement, and I hope that no further unnecessary delay will occur. As to the Barrack Loan, I may say that of the £4,100,000 included in it £1,680,000 has been authorised for expenditure and about £1,000,000 has been actually expended up to date. At Aldershot, the station which involves the largest expenditure, the greater part of the reconstruction of the camp, so far as accommodation for officers and men is concerned, is completed, and good progress has been made with the accessory buildings. At Shorncliffe a large proportion of the reconstruction has been finished. At the Curragh the first large contract for the two cavalry barracks has been taken, and other works are in progress. At Colchester a large number of married soldiers' quarters are in course of construction, the new military hospital will shortly be begun, and the plans for reconstruction of part of the camp are being made. At London the works are well advanced, and in Dublin the new cavalry barracks have been completed; the reconstruction of the Royal Barracks is nearly finished, and the work is being pushed on at those other barracks at which expenditure under the loan is contemplated. As stated in the brief Memorandum, issued with the Estimates, the first instalment of terminable annuity in payment of the Barrack Loan is charged on the Votes of this year at £32,000; and in view of this large expenditure, the Committee will approve of a rather careful, or even close-fisted, policy being pursued with regard to ordinary works. We have, therefore, endeavoured to confine to the strictest limit the undertaking

of new works. We have gone on reasonably with those in hand, and we have given—and this, I think, is important—an increased sum for maintenance. Undoubtedly there is a tendency with all of us on many occasions to spend more upon new works, whether in progress or not, for which there is considerable pressure, and to reduce and starve maintenance and up-keep of old buildings. Though I have often been a party to it myself, I do not think that this is good policy. As to munitions of war, I shall only refer to the most recent and most interesting of our arms—the magazine rifle—which will soon be complete in its issue. Three hundred and forty-six thousand rifles have been manufactured—56,000 are in the hands of troops, and 70,000 are in India. That is the position of affairs now. The manufacture of the new Cavalry carbine is progressing, and it will shortly be issued. No fewer than 86 batteries (53 at home and 33 in India) are armed with a 12-pounder gun. I hope the hon. Member for West Belfast is not here, for he would urge that we should proceed much faster, and I wish we could. A lighter field gun is being considered, but we have not arrived at any decision on the matter yet. As to the Non-Effective Vote, I have only one point to refer to. It is the question of those known as veterans—men who have a medal for a campaign before 1860, and who have rendered a substantial service of at least 10 years, but who are now in destitute or impecunious circumstances. I would remind the Committee that these men have no title whatever to claim pensions, as they have none of them served to the pensionable age, and they were well aware of that when they left the Service, so that really they have no grievance to complain of. The late Government proposed to give 100 of these pensions a year, and they supplemented that by a round sum of £5,000, which was to be kept filled up as vacancies occurred. That enabled about 850 pensions to be given; but there still remain, as the Committee will well understand, a large number of men who have not received them, and who are every whit as much entitled to the pension as those to whom it has been granted. There is no distinction drawn in the granting of the pensions, and the work is done by the Chelsea Commissioners, who are an exceedingly careful and able Body. The

pensions have been granted on the ground, I presume, of necessity and urgency. I hope the Committee will remember, as I have said, that the men have no claim to these pensions as a matter of right, nor would I say they are granted as a mere matter of pity. It is not because a man may have been present in the Crimea or in the Indian Mutiny that they have a claim. That is not the ground on which they are given. They are given in the interests of the Army, because it is injurious to the Service, and especially to the work of recruiting, that men who have served in the Army should be found loafing about the streets in a destitute condition, really bringing disgrace upon the Service. We make destitution—I should be glad if a better word could be found—we make very reduced circumstances, amounting almost to destitution, the condition on which the pensions are given. It may be asked, “Why do you keep the pensions from the more thrifty men who are striving to maintain their families, and give them to the improvident who have reduced themselves to this state of destitution?” My answer to that is to be found in what I have just said, that the pensions are granted in the interests of the Army. It does disservice to the Army that men in a destitute state, perhaps wearing a medal and being able to say that they had taken part in these great campaigns, should be found about the streets in a state of want. Confining the matter to this ground, as we are obliged to do, I hope to be able to make arrangements for a very large increase of the money voted for this purpose during the coming year, which I trust will enable us to take up the greater part of the claims already sent in to the Chelsea Commissioners. This will be met in the Vote, because the natural decrease of the long-service pensions, which are dying out, will give margin enough to enable us to return this money to the soldier. I have made a pretty long statement, but I hope not an unbusiness-like one. I thank the Committee for the patience with which they have listened to me. Any details can, of course, be dealt with on individual Votes. I am happily circumstanced in this: that while I can tell of no new departure and no great fresh reforms, I honestly believe, whatever may be said of our having no Army and having got so little for our

*Mr. Campbell-Bannerman*

money, that no Secretary of State for War has ever been able to give a better report than I am able to give to-night of the condition of the defensive force of this country. Blemishes and weaknesses there are, not always avoidable. The new plant of modern improvement, grafted upon the old, withered, gnarled stem of military tradition, may not produce so symmetrical and shapely a tree as might be developed from a vigorous sapling freshly planted in the soil; but I believe that in real strength, in adaptation to our purposes, and in hold upon public confidence, we perhaps do not lose even by some of the very anomalies which it is so easy to point out. And I am not afraid to ask from the House of Commons even the increased sum which I deem necessary for next year, in order to maintain in efficiency an Army whose present zeal in your service is worthy of its ancient renown.

Motion made, and Question proposed,

“That a number of Land Forces not exceeding 154,442, all ranks, be maintained for the Service of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland at Home and Abroad, excluding Her Majesty's Indian Possessions, during the year ending on the 31st day of March 1894.”—(*Mr. Campbell-Bannerman.*)

\***MR. E. STANHOPE**: I rise simply to express my sense of the clear, business-like, and interesting speech of the right hon. Gentleman; all the more because it has been made under circumstances which, as we all understand, are very exceptional. We ourselves should be under great difficulty in making any comments now; therefore, in accordance with the understanding that has been arrived at, I move to report Progress.

Motion made, and Question, “That the Chairman do report Progress, and ask leave to sit again,”—(*Mr. E. Stanhope,*)—put, and agreed to.

Committee report Progress; to sit again upon Monday next.

**MR. SPEAKER**, in pursuance of the Resolution of 10th March, adjourned the House without Question put.

House adjourned at twenty-five minutes after Eight o'clock till Monday next.

## HOUSE OF LORDS,

Monday, 13th March 1893.

Several Lords—Took the Oath.

PRIVATE AND PROVISIONAL ORDER  
CONFIRMATION BILLS.

Ordered, That no Private Bill brought from the House of Commons shall be read a second time after Friday, the 16th day of June next.

That no Bill originating in this House confirming any Provisional Order in pursuance of a report of the Board of Agriculture relating to the enclosure or regulation of a common, or confirming any scheme certified by the said Board relating to a Metropolitan common, or confirming any scheme of the Charity Commissioners for England and Wales, shall be read a first time after Thursday, the 11th day of May next.

That no Bill originating in this House confirming any Provisional Order or Provisional Certificate shall be read a first time after Thursday, the 11th day of May next.

That no Bill brought from the House of Commons confirming any Provisional Order in pursuance of a report of the Board of Agriculture relating to the enclosure or regulation of a common, or confirming any scheme certified by the said Board relating to a Metropolitan common, or confirming any scheme of the Charity Commissioners for England and Wales, shall be read a second time after Tuesday, the 27th day of June next.

That no Bill brought from the House of Commons confirming any Provisional Order or Provisional Certificate shall be read a second time after Tuesday, the 27th day of June next.

That when a Bill shall have passed this House with amendments these Orders shall not apply to any new Bill sent up from the House of Commons which the Chairman of Committees shall report to the House is substantially the same as the Bill so amended.

That this House will not receive any petition for a Private Bill after Tuesday, the 2nd day of May next, unless such Private Bill shall have been approved by the Chancery Division of the High Court of Justice; nor any petition for a Private Bill approved by the Chancery Division of the High Court of Justice after Friday, the 5th day of May next.

That this House will not receive any report from the Judges upon petitions presented to this House for Private Bills after Friday, the 5th day of May next.

Ordered, That the said Orders be printed and published, and affixed on the doors of this House and Westminster Hall. (No. 31.)

VOL. IX. [FOURTH SERIES.]

## THE LIQUOR LAWS.

## QUESTION. OBSERVATIONS.

THE EARL OF WEMYSS asked Her Majesty's Government if they would take steps to obtain and lay before Parliament reliable information regarding the present working of the "Liquor Laws" in Canada and in the United States, in continuation of Papers already presented to Parliament? He said he had no intention of inflicting a speech on the liquor traffic on the House, and in asking the question would carefully avoid giving any opinion of his own on the subject. Four years ago he had moved for Papers with reference to the Liquor Laws in Canada and the United States, in continuation of Papers already before the House. At that time public attention had been forcibly drawn to the question by an article in *Macmillan's Magazine* from the pen of Professor Goldwin Smith, showing conclusively that that kind of legislation had been a failure in those countries, and strongly urging our Government and Parliament not to embark on such prohibitory liquor legislation as prevailed there without having previously instituted a full inquiry by Commission into the working of those laws. Her Majesty's Government had consented to place those Papers on the Table of the House, and they were now before their Lordships. In asking for further information on the subject, he had no intention of making a speech on the whole subject of the Liquor Laws, which they would have an opportunity of discussing when the Bill of the right rev. Prelate (the Bishop of Chester) came before them, and possibly another measure which might, though he doubted it, reach them from another place. In view of the discussion of this important subject, he would quote from the Papers already before the House, as but few of their Lordships probably had looked at them, some official opinions given among them. In the first set, from America, Mr. Edwardes, Secretary of Legation, stated in his Report, under the head of "General Remarks"—

"As will be seen from the above Report the popular vote has been taken, since 1887, in five States on the question of adopting an amendment to the State Constitution by which, if carried, prohibition would have been established in the State. In each case the voters have



declared themselves, by a large majority, against prohibition.

"In the State of Rhode Island, where prohibition has existed since 1886, an election has been held during the current year by which that system was voted against by considerably more than the required majority of three-fifths of the whole vote.

"An amendment to a State Constitution can only be made by a majority of three-fifths of the popular vote. In Rhode Island in 1886 prohibition was carried by the necessary majority. In 1889 prohibition, which had thus become a law of the State Constitution, was defeated by the necessary majority.

"This change of opinion on the part of such a large number of the population of one State, amounting to, as it must have done, at least one-fifth of the whole, having taken place, as it did, after less than three years' experience of the working of the prohibitory law, is a strong argument against the system. The theory of prohibition may be worthy of consideration and praise, but the absolute impracticability of the working of such system in most places where it has been tried has led a large number of those who earnestly desire to promote temperance to consider whether the object they have in view will not be better advanced by a change to a system of legislation which, although not so perfect in theory, can be practically worked."

Turning to the Papers from Canada Lord Stanley of Preston, in the introductory paragraph of a letter to Lord Knutsford, dated 2nd March, 1892, said—

"As regards Dominion legislation, your Lordship will observe that the Canada Temperance Act has been repealed by the votes of the electors in every county of the Province of Ontario in which it had been in force, and now remains in force in only 33 counties throughout the Dominion, though it had been adopted by 64."

Then referring to the Australian Colonies, the Earl of Onslow said, with regard to New Zealand, in a letter to Lord Knutsford, dated May 17th, 1890—

"With reference to the special points upon which Lord Wemyss dwelt in his speech and upon which he seeks for information, I have to inform your Lordship that there is power given to the ratepayers of New Zealand to declare for absolute prohibition, and they merely vote for or against an increase in the number of licences then existing. It is admitted on all sides that the 'Local Option' Clauses of the Act of 1881 have not had the effect anticipated, and it is in contemplation of Parliament to enable a direct issue to be placed before the people and to be decided by them."

The only other document which it was necessary to refer to was a very important Report made by the Commission in New South Wales appointed to inquire into the working of the Liquor Laws. In their Report the Commissioners—and he

mentioned it the more on that account—referred to the Report of the Select Committee of their Lordships' House on Intemperance, and stated that, as a result of two years' searching evidence and careful deliberation, it was well worth the study of legislators and all who took an interest in the liquor question and the whole scope of the laws by which the sale of strong drink was regulated. The Commissioners went on to say—

"Your Commissioners do not enumerate the recommendations of the Lords' Committee, none of which were of a sweeping or sensational character, but refer to them only to say that the evidence they have taken and the opinions they have formed bring them to a similar conclusion—namely, that, as to prohibiting the sale of intoxicating liquor with the intention or hope of putting down drunkenness, legislation alone would not be successful. Habits and tastes cannot suddenly be changed, nor in a free country would people submit quietly to what they might consider undue restraint. The most obvious remedy is in the hands of the people themselves—let them drink less."

The Commissioners further said—

"The Lords' Committee are of opinion, although not going so far as to recommend them, that, for the purpose of experiment, legal sanction should be obtained for the trial of either the Gothenburg or Mr. Chamberlain's scheme, on the application to that effect from Local Authorities; but your Commissioners do not feel warranted in suggesting the adoption of either system, though it will be well to watch the result of any movement of the sort elsewhere."

In fact, they suggested that it would be advisable to wait and see the experiment tried upon the *corpus vilum* of this country before adopting it in New South Wales. Those were all the documents he thought it necessary to bring forward on the present occasion, and probably there would be no objection to supplying the Papers he asked for in order to bring the subject up to date before their Lordships as regarded the Australian Colonies (which he should have included in the Motion), Canada, and the United States, from the last date, 1889. He hoped, therefore, that his noble Friend who had charge of the documents would consent to the Papers being laid on the Table of the House, as they would be very useful in any future discussion.

Moved, That there be laid on the Table of the House—

"Papers with reference to the Liquor Laws in the United States, Canada, and the Australian Colonies."—(*The Earl of Wemyss.*)

*The Earl of Wemyss*

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (The Earl of ROSEBERY) : My Lords, in reply to my noble Friend, I have only to say that, as far as I am concerned, the Reports he asks for will be sent for from the United States, and, on behalf of my noble Friend the Secretary of State for the Colonies, they will be sent for from the Australian Colonies and from Canada.

Motion agreed to.

#### POWERS OF VICEROYS OF IRELAND.

##### QUESTION. OBSERVATIONS.

\*LORD ASHBOURNE asked the First Lord of the Admiralty under what authority or power he was acting when (as he stated on 3rd March last) during his tenure of office as Lord Lieutenant he over-ruled the objections of the Military Authorities and broke up regiments into divisions to be sent into parts of Ireland when the peace of a district was threatened? He said: My Lords, the noble Earl the First Lord of the Admiralty having stated in your Lordships' House on 3rd March last that he frequently during his tenure of office in Ireland differed from the Military Authorities in their decisions and broke up regiments into small detachments, I wish him to state to your Lordships by what right, under what authority, and wielding what jurisdiction he so acted?

THE FIRST LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY (Earl SPENCER): My Lords, I hardly think the noble and learned Lord has put a right interpretation on my remarks. I am not aware that I personally ever broke up a regiment at all. What did occur was this: In some instances during my first period as Viceroy, and on one occasion in the second, the Military Authorities wished to call in detachments from Mayo, Castlebar, and other places, and if the county was not in a quiet state I dissented from that course. In that sense I over-ruled their decisions; but in no case that I can remember, out of many similar ones, did I ever have to exercise my authority or my powers under the prerogative, whatever they might be, and the Military Authorities invariably did what I wished in regard to these matters. Another occasion happened when a scheme for altering the disposition of the forces in the country and

making a re-arrangement of them was proposed. I have not been able to refer to all those cases, but I have received from the Irish Office a Report of what happened upon one occasion of that sort when I had a conference with the Military Authorities, and they altered their arrangements in consequence of what I said. I never had to exercise the full powers which I might have possessed, and, therefore, I do not understand what it is the noble and learned Lord desires. I do not wish to enter into a disquisition with the noble and learned Lord as to what the powers of the Lord Lieutenant over the heads of the Military and Civil Authorities in Ireland are with regard to these matters, and I hardly think it desirable to do so.

\*LORD ASHBOURNE: My Lords, it is a matter of such high importance to ascertain with something like precision and definiteness what are the powers of the Lord Lieutenant and the civil powers in Ireland over the police—

EARL SPENCER: The police?

\*LORD ASHBOURNE: Over the military power of the Crown that I shall refer to the matter again on Thursday, with the object of obtaining a fuller and, I hope, a clearer explanation.

EARL SPENCER: I may say, if the noble and learned Lord wishes to save the time and trouble of the House, that I have inquired into the matter, and I have here a distinct opinion that the Lord Lieutenant under the patent is entitled to give such orders and directions to the Commander of the Queen's Forces in Ireland, as he may think necessary in the exercise of the prerogative of the Crown.

\*LORD ASHBOURNE: Then it is all the more necessary to go into the matter on Thursday?

#### BILLS OF SALE BILL [H.L.].—(No. 7.)

Order of the Day for the House to be again in Committee, read, and discharged.

House to be again in Committee on Thursday next.

#### ARCHDEACONRY OF CORNWALL BILL [H.L.].—(No. 19.)

Read 3<sup>a</sup> (according to order), and passed, and sent to the Commons.

## COINAGE (No. 2) BILL.—(No. 28.)

Read 3<sup>a</sup> (according to order), and passed.

House adjourned at a quarter before Five o'clock, till To-morrow, a quarter past Ten o'clock.

## HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Monday, 13th March 1893.

## QUESTIONS.

## IRISH FISH FOR LONDON.

**MR. A. C. MORTON** (Peterborough): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he is aware that the supply of Irish mackerel and herrings coming *viâ* New Milford, on the Great Western Railway, to London, has been reduced to about one-fourth of what it was three years back owing to the high railway rates charged, namely, 57s. 6d. per ton as compared with the charge of 30s. per ton from New Milford to Liverpool; and whether he will make representations to the Railway Company to induce them to lower these rates, and so facilitate the bringing to London of a good and cheap supply of fresh fish?

**THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE** (Mr. MUNDELLA, Sheffield, Brightside): I have no information as to the amount of fish coming *viâ* Milford and Neyland to London on the Great Western Railway. The amount of fish returned as landed at Neyland and Milford for the last three years does not show any decrease. In 1889 there were landed at Neyland and Milford (which are practically one port) 270,576 cwts. of fish, excluding shell fish, and in 1892 there were landed 370,687 cwts. In 1889 there were brought inland from the ports of Milford and Neyland 394,080 cwts., and in 1892 429,600 cwts.

\***MR. A. C. MORTON**: Is it in accordance with the law for the Company to allow these preference rates in favour of Liverpool?

**MR. MUNDELLA**: If there is a preference rate it is illegal. I will have the matter inquired into.

## WRECKS ON THE SPANISH COAST.

**MR. CAYZER** (Barrow-in-Furness): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he would state the number of British vessels of the Royal and Merchant Navy wrecked on the coast of Spain and Portugal during the last five years and up to date, with the number of lives lost; whether he has any information to show whether these losses are largely attributable to the insufficient, defective, and irregular condition of the lights on the coasts; and whether Her Majesty's Government propose to take any action to place the lighting of these dangerous coasts in a proper and effective condition?

**MR. MUNDELLA**: During the last five years and up to date there have been on the coasts of Spain and Portugal, according to Reports received, two cases of strandings of British men-of-war (H.M.S. *Serpent*, with a loss of 173 lives, and H.M.S. *Howe*, with no loss of life) and 176 cases of strandings of British merchant vessels with a loss of 210 lives. I am advised that an improved system of lighting would conduce to greater safety to shipping. Her Majesty's Government are not in a position to place the lighting of the coasts of foreign countries in "a proper and effective condition," but the Board of Trade have made repeated representations to the Foreign Office on this subject for communication to Foreign Governments.

## THE UNITED STATES MAILS.

**MR. MACARTNEY** (Antrim, S.): I had wished to ask the Postmaster General whether his attention has been called to the fact that the *New York*, one of the fastest Atlantic liners, and the *Aurania*, a comparatively slow vessel, started from New York about the same hour on 25th February, the *New York*, carrying the mails for Great Britain and Ireland, and the *Aurania* ship's letters only, that the *New York* reached Southampton on Saturday at 9.40 p.m., and the *Aurania*, Queenstown, on Sunday, at 1.50 a.m., so that the delivery of mail per *New York* was necessarily delayed in London, English Provinces, Dublin, and Belfast until Monday morning, and in Cork and Galway until Monday afternoon; and whether, as by this arrangement England gained nothing,

while the Irish mails were unnecessarily delayed 24 hours, he will endeavour to take such steps as may secure all homeward mails being landed at Queenstown. I understand that the question was answered at length on Friday. Has the right hon. Gentleman any further information to give.

**THE POSTMASTER GENERAL** (Mr. A. MORLEY, Nottingham, E.): No, Sir; I have nothing to add. I shall be pleased to give the hon. Member a copy of my answer of the 10th inst.

#### CONGESTED DISTRICTS IN DONEGAL.

**MR. HORACE PLUNKETT** (Dublin Co., S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether his attention has been called to a statement in *The Freeman's Journal* of the 3rd March, 1893, and other newspapers, to the effect that the Congested Districts Board are about to expend £9,520 on relief works in County Donegal; whether, as a matter of law, expenditure upon relief works, in the ordinary acceptance of the term, is within the powers of the Board; and whether he is aware that the works projected in County Donegal have reference only to permanent improvement of certain congested areas, although their execution may in some cases be timed so as to avert exceptional distress?

**\*THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND** (Mr. J. MORLEY, Newcastle-upon-Tyne): The Congested Districts Board are about to make and repair some roads in the County of Donegal at an estimated expenditure of £9,520. These works are intended for the permanent improvement of the localities, and not for the purpose of relieving temporary and exceptional distress. The provision of immediate relief for destitute persons is not one of the duties entrusted to the Board by the Legislature.

#### EDUCATIONAL COMPARISONS.

**MR. WEBSTER** (St. Pancras, E.): I beg to ask the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education whether it is in his power to state the percentage of children who have passed the First Standard in Ireland as compared with those in Great Britain?

**THE VICE PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL** (Mr. A. ACLAND, York, W.R., Rotherham): I am informed by

the Commissioners of National Education in Ireland that the percentage of passes in the First Class is 85.5. This Class is, however, not identical with the First Standard in England and Wales. The system of individual passes having been abolished by the Code of 1891, there is no percentage of passes in England and Wales to be compared with the Irish figures.

#### METROPOLITAN BILLS IN PARLIAMENT.

**MR. WEBSTER**: I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board whether his attention has been called to the Parliamentary Return laid upon the Table, giving the expenses incurred by the Metropolitan Board of Works and the London County Council in promoting and opposing Bills before Parliament in each year from 1886 to 1891; and whether, in view of the fact that whilst for the three years, from 1886 to 1888, the total expenditure of the former body was £13,924, or an annual expenditure of £4,641 for these purposes, and that the expenditure of the London County Council in the following three years, from 1889 to 1891, amounted to £33,078, or an annual expenditure of £11,026, he will, in connection with the London County Council Money Bill or otherwise, investigate the matter with the view, if practicable, of controlling this expenditure?

**\*THE PRESIDENT OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD** (Mr. H. H. FOWLER, Wolverhampton, E.): The expenses which have been incurred by the London County Council in promoting and opposing Bills in Parliament have been incurred by them in pursuance of their statutory powers and in the interests of the ratepayers of the County of London, of whom they are the representatives, and to whom they are responsible. I am not prepared to make any investigation of the matter as suggested.

**MR. WEBSTER**: Does not the Government Auditor inspect the accounts, and is not the amount three times as much as it was four years ago?

**MR. H. H. FOWLER**: This is a matter in which the County Council exercise their own judgment.

## FREE EDUCATION AT LIVERPOOL.

MR. SNAPE (Lancashire, S.E., Heywood): I beg to ask the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education if he is aware the Schedule issued by the Liverpool School Board to school managers provides for free education being allowed under two headings only—namely, cases belonging to a family of which other members are already attending without fees by reason of poverty, and fresh cases of poverty, which Schedule cannot be filled up without the manager's inquiry into the circumstances of the parents; and whether any inquiry as to the poverty of the parents as a condition of granting claims for free education is contrary to the law; and, if so, whether he will give instructions to that effect to the Liverpool School Board?

MR. ACLAND: One of the forms issued under the authority of the Liverpool School Board, containing the words "Lists of applications for Free Education," contains also headings under which applications are allowed on the ground of poverty. No doubt some form of inquiry must be necessary in order to fill up these forms. I am not able to say whether such a form is contrary to the law, but it is entirely out of harmony with the spirit of the Act of 1891. The Department have addressed a strong remonstrance to the Board.

\*MR. LAWRENCE (Liverpool, Abercromby): May I ask, the right hon. Gentleman whether, inasmuch as the Liverpool School Board does provide free education within the terms of the Act to all parents applying therefor, the statement in the first paragraph of the hon. Member's question is not as a matter of fact a suggestion of that which is not the case?

MR. ACLAND: I cannot offer a legal opinion, but I may say the present action of the Board is the strongest argument I have yet had in favour of an alteration of the law.

\*MR. LAWRENCE: Will the right hon. Gentleman tell me under what Act any parent can demand free education at a particular school? Is he aware this agitation is against the old policy of the Board, set out in print long before the last Board was elected, and never in the least impugned?

MR. SPEAKER: Order, order!

MR. BARTLEY (Islington, N.): May I ask if the Liverpool School Board are not acting in accordance with Act of Parliament, and on what authority he says they are acting in a deliberate way contrary to the spirit of the Act?

MR. ACLAND: I venture to assert that both sides of the House when they passed the Act desired to do away with any poverty distinction. In the present case the Liverpool Board are not doing that.

## THE PROMOTION OF IRISH TEACHERS.

MR. DONAL SULLIVAN (Westmeath, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether the Commissioners of National Education for Ireland have made a recent Rule whereby assistant teachers are debarred from promotion to first of first class; if he can ascertain the number of assistants who have been refused admission to the July examinations in 1892 as candidates for promotion to first of first class; and if he can ascertain the number of assistants (if any) who have been admitted to the July examination quarter as candidates for promotion to first of first class?

\*MR. J. MORLEY: The Commissioners inform me that no such recent Rule as that indicated has been made, but that, on the other hand, a restriction formerly in force, that required an assistant promoted on examination to the first of first class to obtain charge of a school as principal within two years, as a condition of confirmation of the promotion, was abolished at the last revision of the Code. The answer to paragraph two is 9, and to paragraph three 14.

## STRANORLAR AND GLENTIES RAILWAY.

MR. T. D. SULLIVAN (Donegal, W.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland if he has received a copy of resolutions, passed unanimously by the Guardians of the Glenties Union, County Donegal, on 25th February, complaining that the contractors for the Stranorlar and Glenties Railway, which is being made by means of a Government grant, have for a considerable time past practically suspended their operations; and whether, in view of the urgent need of employment among the people, the Government will adopt

measures to cause the said contractors to resume the construction of the line?

\*MR. J. MORLEY: I have not seen the resolutions referred to, but I am informed that the strike alluded to therein is now at an end, and that work has been resumed.

#### RECRUITING THE ROYAL NAVAL RESERVE.

MR. WILLOX (Liverpool, Everton): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty whether the Government have been in communication with the owners of the White Star line of steamers, with the view of constraining the marine engineers of that company to join the Royal Naval Reserve; whether the notice requiring such engineers to join the Royal Naval Reserve within two months is in accordance with the terms under which merchant steamers are engaged as armed cruisers; and whether the Government are prepared to recommend that engineers who join the Royal Naval Reserve shall be allowed the same retaining fee as is given to other officers, marine engineers at present receiving no fee on the ground that they are non-combatants?

\*THE SECRETARY TO THE ADMIRALTY (Sir U. KAY-SHUTTLEWORTH, Lancashire, Clitheroe): The reply to the first two questions is in the negative. The owners probably make their own conditions with their engineers, so as to secure that the required proportion of officers and engineers join the Royal Naval Reserve. In reply to the third question, it is not the case that engineers, Royal Naval Reserve, receive no retaining fee on the ground that they are non-combatants. The retaining fee which other officers receive is on account of their having served 12 months' training in the Royal Navy, for which there is no provision in the regulations for engineer officers.

#### WRECK ON BRIGGS REEF.

COLONEL WARING (Down, N.): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether his attention has been called to the Report of the officer of the Commissioners of Irish Lights relative to the wreck of the *Emily*, lying on Briggs Reef, off Groomsport, County Down; whether he is aware that, in the

event of a vessel stranding on Briggs Reef at night in the vicinity of the wreck, the danger would be so great that the lifeboat crew could not venture to approach her; and whether, taking into consideration the extreme danger, not from the launching of the lifeboat, but from her going off to or returning from a vessel in distress, he will at once give the necessary order for the removal of the wreck in question?

MR. MUNDELLA: Under the Acts for the removal of wrecks in the way of lifeboat service the Board of Trade can only deal with recommendations made by a General Lighthouse Authority. In the case referred to no such recommendation has been made. The Commissioners of Irish Lights informed the Board of Trade last May that, after consideration of the Report referred to, they were led to the opinion that the wreck did not constitute a danger to the lifeboat service.

#### TRAVELLING EXPENSES OF SCOTCH COUNTY COUNCILLORS.

MR. MACGREGOR (Inverness-shire): I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland whether there are any means available wherewith to defray the travelling expenses of County Councillors who, in the Highlands of Scotland, in many cases have long distances to travel to attend the meetings of the Council; and, if not, will the Government make provision to enable poor members of the Council to attend to their public duties?

MR. HOZIER (Lanarkshire, S.): At the same time, I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland what legal authority he had for permitting, as in the case of Ross-shire, the payment of County Councillors' travelling expenses out of the rates?

THE SECRETARY FOR SCOTLAND (Sir G. TREVELYAN, Glasgow, Bridgeton): The question relating to the payment of travelling expenses of County Councillors in the Highlands of Scotland is a very serious and important one. I am advised that in the event of a sub-committee or of individual members of a County Council being deputed to undertake some special work, such as the inspection of a distant road or bridge, their travelling expenses might competently be defrayed out of the County Council funds, as being incidental to the performance by the Council of its duties,

and as probably saving the cost of having the same work done by professional persons, but that it would not be admissible to pay out of the County Council funds the expenses of County Councillors travelling to or from the ordinary meetings of the Council or of District Committees. I propose to direct a Circular to be issued to County Councils intimating my intention to act upon these views.

MR. HOZIER: Did the right hon. Gentleman send the letter that appeared in the *Highland News* last week authorising the Ross-shire County Council to pay County Councillors' travelling expenses out of the rates?

SIR G. TREVELYAN: This matter was brought before the Secretary for Scotland in May last, and he found that there was considerable difference of opinion on the matter. A letter in the sense of the first part of my answer was addressed some time ago to the County Clerk of Sutherland. A letter of the nature which the hon. Member describes was addressed to the County Clerk for Ross-shire not authorising any particular expenditure, but saying that they would be favourably considered and probably granted. I have gone into the matter completely, and acted on the advice of the Lord Advocate, and I have no doubt the present Circular will meet the case.

MR. MACGREGOR: Does not the right hon. Gentleman think the rates would be well spent in paying the expenses incurred by County Councillors in the discharge of their public duties?

SIR R. PAGET (Somerset, Wells): Has the right hon. Gentleman acted in this matter in consultation with the President of the Local Government Board with a view to taking action of a like character?

SIR G. TREVELYAN: No, Sir; I have not consulted the right hon. Gentleman.

#### REGULATING THE SALE OF PATENT MEDICINES.

MR. FREDERICK FRYE (Kensington, N.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what he proposes to do with the large sum recovered for penalties which the Pharmaceutical Society state they have obtained

from unregistered persons whom they prosecuted for selling medicines containing poisons, such having been hitherto known by the name of "Patent Medicines," which, according to the Pharmacy Act of 1868, are exempt from the penal clauses of that Act; whether it is proposed, in view of the new interpretation which has been put upon the term "Patent Medicine" by the recent decision of the Judges in the Divisional Court, on the appeal of the "Pharmaceutical Society v. Piper and Company," he will take any steps to prevent the Pharmaceutical Society from recovering penalties for a period of six months to enable traders to clear out their stocks of such goods, the sale of which is prevented by this new rendering of the law; and whether the Government are prepared to bring in a Bill to amend the Pharmacy Act of 1868, so as to include stamped proprietary medicines, and to make the penalty of £5 for an offence against the Act (as provided in Section 15 of the Pharmacy Act of 1868) similar to the provisions in Section 17 of the Pharmacy Act of 1890, in which the penalty is not exceeding £5?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (MR. ASQUITH, Fife, E.): As regards the first part of the question, Section 14 of the Pharmacy Act, 1852, provides that the penalties shall be paid as the Treasury directs. "Patent medicines" containing scheduled poisons are not exempt from the provisions of Section 17 of the Pharmacy Act, 1868, or the penalties thereunder. As regards the second part of the question, the Pharmacy Acts, 1852 and 1868, provide that penalties shall be recovered by the Registrar of the Pharmaceutical Society, in the name and by the authority of that Society, and I have no power to interfere. With regard to the third part of the question, it would appear from communications which have been received by the Privy Council Office from Coroners that it would be undesirable to give further facilities for the sale of proprietary medicines containing scheduled poisons. The Act of 1890, to which my hon. Friend refers, applies solely to Ireland, and as at present advised I am not prepared to propose legislation on the subject.

*Sir G. Trevelyan*

## SUNDAY DISTURBANCES AT DUNLOY.

MR. CONNOR (Antrim, N.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland if it is the case that the police have been withdrawn from the village of Dunloy, County Antrim; whether he is aware that, on the 20th ultimo, the congregation of Dunloy Presbyterian Church were molested on their way to the church, disturbed by a band playing outside while service was going on, and assaulted whilst proceeding quietly home after service; and whether any steps have been taken to prevent a recurrence of these attacks, and to afford suitable protection to the law-abiding people in that district for the future?

\*MR. J. MORLEY: It is reported to me that the police station at Dunloy was discontinued in March 1892. Some disorder of the nature indicated has occurred, but not, as I am informed, of a serious character. Special steps have been taken by the police to prevent a recurrence of disturbance, and a prosecution is now pending at Petty Sessions arising out of a recent act of disorder in the locality.

## THE CASE OF PETER GRAHAM.

MR. FLEMING (York, W.R., Doncaster): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether his attention has been called to a statement in *Truth* newspaper of the case of Peter Graham, charged at Liverpool before Mr. Stewart, stipendiary magistrate, with not accounting for a ring which he had in his possession, when the magistrate sentenced him to 14 days' hard labour; and, on the prisoner asking, "Fourteen days for what, for spending my own money?" added "One month for impertinence as well;" whether the statement in the newspaper is true, and whether there was evidence to justify the conviction; and whether the month for impertinence was in fact inflicted; if so, was it warranted by any law?

MR. ASQUITH: I am in communication with the stipendiary, but have not yet received a reply. Perhaps I may be allowed in the meantime to refer my hon. Friend to a letter from Mr. Stewart which appeared in *The Liverpool Echo*, of February 20th, in which he stated that Peter Graham was sentenced to 14

days only, and for no other offence than that for which he was originally taken into custody.

## SLAVE TRADE IN MADAGASCAR WATERS.

MR. CARVELL WILLIAMS (Notts, Mansfield): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty if he will lay upon the Table of the House any instructions which have been issued to officers of Her Majesty's Navy to refrain from exercising the right of search and seizure of vessels suspected of being engaged in slave trading in Madagascar waters?

\*SIR U. KAY-SHUTTLEWORTH: This subject has already been explained by answers given in this House on Friday and Saturday by my hon. Friend the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. It is not thought necessary to lay the naval officers' instructions on the Table. But I can inform my hon. Friend the Member for the Mansfield Division that they were to the effect that, the protectorate and consequent control of France over the territorial waters of Madagascar having been recognised, naval officers must refrain from interference with vessels of any nationality in Madagascar waters.

## SALMON POACHING IN THE ALLAN.

MR. JACKS (Stirlingshire): I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland if his attention had been drawn to the case of alleged salmon poaching in the Allan, near Airthrey Paper Mills, Bridge of Allan, where two bailiffs watched a lad take a salmon from the river and did not in any way offer to prevent him; if he is aware that the action on the part of the bailiffs caused great irritation in the district; and if he can see his way to give instructions that in future water bailiffs should endeavour to prevent as well as to secure convictions in cases of poaching?

SIR G. TREVELYAN: From the report which I have read the account given in the question is correct. I have no power to give instructions to water bailiffs; but if a case of imprisonment is brought before me for consideration in which the act of poaching might have been prevented by the bailiffs, and was not prevented, I shall give that circumstance due weight. In this instance the fine was paid, as far as I can see, by the lawyer who was defending the prisoner.



THE APPOINTMENT OF LABOUR  
CORRESPONDENTS.

COLONEL HOWARD VINCENT (Sheffield, Central) : I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade what salary or remuneration is to be paid to the Provincial Correspondents of the Labour Department, and if they will be strictly forbidden as public servants to engage henceforward in active political or municipal work of any kind ?

MR. MUNDELLA : The remuneration of Local Correspondents of the Labour Department will be by a small annual fee. The arrangements made with these gentlemen are entirely provisional, and the rules governing permanent officials of the State cannot be applied to them.

COLONEL HOWARD VINCENT : Do I understand the right hon. Gentleman to say that these Correspondents are not entitled to any pension ?

MR. MUNDELLA : They are paid a small sum for their labour, but in no single case are the payments such as would entitle them to be considered Civil servants.

SIR J. GORST (Cambridge University) : Will they be allowed to take an active part in political organisation ?

MR. MUNDELLA : It cannot be expected that men who are paid so little as £20 should refrain from taking part in movements.

SIR J. GORST : My question was, would they be allowed to take part in Party and political organisations ?

MR. MUNDELLA : Certainly, Sir.

MR. BARTLEY : May I ask whether it is the fact that all but two of these Correspondents are strong Gladstonian politicians, and that one of them is the right hon. Gentleman's leading supporter in the Brightside Division of Sheffield ?

MR. MUNDELLA : I am not aware of any such fact. I happen to know one of them, but he was not appointed for his political opinions. None of them have been appointed on that ground.

MR. JAMES LOWTHER (Kent, Thanet) : Are these functionaries removable ?

MR. MUNDELLA : Certainly.

MR. FENWICK (Northumberland, Wansbeck) : Is it not the fact that one of the chief Labour Correspondents is a

Conservative and takes part in Conservative public meetings ?

MR. MUNDELLA : I believe that is the case. At any rate, I am told so. I am told there are representatives of all sides and of all parties and politics.

COLONEL H. VINCENT : May I ask the right hon. Gentleman whether he has taken any personal pains to ascertain that the independence of these gentlemen is such as to command the confidence of the labour world, whose movements they are intended to report to the Board of Trade ?

MR. MUNDELLA : If the hon. Gentleman wishes for any further information he must be good enough to put his question on the Paper.

LAND COURT OFFICIALS AND HOME  
RULE.

MR. MICHAEL AUSTIN (Limerick, W.) : I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland if his attention has been directed to a paragraph which appeared in the Limerick papers stating that a Mr. R. W. Jameson, who is a Receiver under the Land Courts, and is also agent to Lord Monteagle, has at present in his office at Foynes a document exposed for signatures against the Home Rule Bill ; whether he is aware that pressure has been exercised by the Receiver on the tenants to sign this document ; and whether he will have inquiry made into the matter, with the view of preventing public officials using their positions for political purposes ?

\*MR. J. MORLEY : The hon. Member has been good enough to send me a newspaper report of this matter, but as the Government have no control over the Receiver named, I do not see that any object would be gained by making inquiry as suggested.

THE ROSCOMMON POLICE.

MR. BODKIN (Roscommon, N.) : I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that great dissatisfaction exists amongst the Royal Irish Constabulary of the Boyle District, County of Roscommon, in consequence of what they regard as unnecessary drilling ; that the men have been drilled three times within the month for an hour at a time in heavy marching order ; and that some of the men so treated are 20 years in the Ser-

vive and thoroughly acquainted with the drill ; and whether he will cause inquiries to be made with a view, if possible, to mitigate the grievance complained of ?

\***MR. J. MORLEY** : The District Inspector at Boyle reports that, so far as he can learn, no marching order parades have been held in his district except those required by the Regulations—namely, one monthly at each barrack and one quarterly on his inspection. There is no foundation for the complaint conveyed in the question, and no member of the force in the District has complained to the District Inspector on the subject.

#### ALLEGED BOYCOTTING AT KILT-YCLOGHER.

**SIR EDWARD HARLAND** (Belfast, N.) : I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, in the case of M'Caffrey, who was prosecuted for poaching and firing at and severely injuring a gamekeeper called Porteous on Belmore Mountain, near Enniskillen, the venue in whose trial was removed to Belfast, and who was there convicted in September 1892, and sentenced to five years' penal servitude, if it has come to the knowledge of the authorities that a witness for the Crown called Meehan, a blacksmith in Kiltyclogher, in the same neighbourhood, has since been strictly boycotted ; that no person dares to employ him or to be seen speaking to him ; that he is being driven to starvation ; and that his life is in danger ; and if it is true that the police had a report of this case to lay before the Judge at the present Assizes, but that the authorities would not allow the matter to be brought under the notice of the Judge ?

\***MR. J. MORLEY** : It is reported that the conviction of M'Caffrey took place at the Belfast Winter Assizes in December 1892, and that Meehan has since been boycotted to the extent that he does not receive any employment from his neighbours. I am informed, however, that the people speak to him as usual, and that he is supplied with the necessaries of life upon paying for them. His life is reported not to be in danger. With regard to the last paragraph of the question, I believe the County Inspector, when waiting upon the Judge before the

opening of Assize, usually explains the state of his county as regards boycotting. In the present instance the County Inspector does not appear to have mentioned to the Judge the case of Meehan, and I am making inquiry as to why he failed to do so. But I can assure the hon. Gentleman that it is not true that the authorities had anything to say in the matter.

#### CORDITE FOR THE ARMY.

**COMMANDER BETHELL** (York, E.R., Holderness) : I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether there is now adequate reserve of Cordite ammunition for the Army ; and, if not, if he proposes taking any steps to increase it ?

\***THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR** (Mr. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN, Stirling, &c.) : The present stock of Cordite ammunition, together with the supply estimated for in 1893-4, is expected amply to meet all probable requirements.

#### FUEL FOR BRITISH NORTH-AMERICAN TROOPS.

**MR. MARTIN** (Worcester, Droitwich) : I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War upon what grounds the allowance of fuel issued to troops quartered in British North America has been considerably diminished ; and whether he has ascertained from the General commanding the troops if such reduced allowance is considered by him to be sufficient ; if not, whether he will at once communicate with him and inform the House what answer he receives ?

\***MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN** : The regulations as to fuel for home service were recently entirely remodelled, with the effect, after the new rules were understood, of giving great satisfaction to the troops. The regulations for foreign stations have subsequently been altered on similar lines, but until the close of the full year, on September 30th, it will not be possible to say whether the issues of fuel in Nova Scotia have been increased or diminished. The General Officer commanding has, however, and is aware that he has, full power to make any extra issues which the comfort of the troops may require.

## THE SLIGO EXTRA POLICE.

MR. PATRICK M'HUGH (Armagh, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that the foreman of the Grand Jury of Sligo at the recent Assizes expressed the opinion that an extra police force was not required in the County Sligo; and will he take steps to remove any extra police force now in that county, so as to prevent extra taxation being levied on the rate-payers of the Town and County of Sligo?

\*MR. J. MORLEY: I am informed that the foreman of the Grand Jury stated he had received from the Divisional Commissioner a letter inquiring whether three men of the extra force could be dispensed with. The foreman and Grand Jury concurred in the opinion that this reduction might be made, and Government have directed that it should take effect from the 1st instant.

## COLONEL CHAMPNEY.

MR. HARDY (Kent, Ashford): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether he is aware that in *The London Gazette* of 21st February it was stated that Colonel Champney, of the 1st Volunteer Battalion, West Riding Regiment, resigns his commission, whereas Colonel Champney gave no authority for the statement; whether he is aware that Colonel Champney on 13th February had specially asked for consideration on account of the heavy financial responsibilities which rested upon him as trustee for the debt of £3,000 on the battalion's drill hall; whether he can state upon what grounds the Volunteer decoration was withheld from Colonel Champney until after the notice in the *Gazette* was issued, although he was entitled to it and had been recommended for it; and whether he will now take measures to furnish Colonel Champney with a copy of the evidence which has induced the War Office to force Colonel Champney's retirement; and also to free Colonel Champney, now that he has no longer any financial *contre*, from the liability for the Drill Hall debt?

\*MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: Colonel Champney was called upon to resign as the result of a Court of Inquiry held in October in 1892; and a letter

which he wrote to the General Officer commanding the district, though somewhat informal, was accepted as a compliance on his part. Colonel Champney had been a zealous officer, and, I believe, had greatly exerted himself to reduce the financial liability of the corps, but the Drill Hall debt is not shown in the "Annual Statement of Accounts" of the battalion, and the matter is not one in which the War Office can intervene. On leaving the Service he was permitted to retain his rank, and the grant to him of the Volunteer decoration was gazetted on the 28th of February. The evidence given before a Court of Inquiry is confidential and cannot be published.

## REWARDS FOR SAVING LIFE.

MR. WOOTTON ISAACSON (Tower Hamlets, Stepney): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether his attention has been drawn to the report of an inquest held at Rotherhithe on the body of a woman which was recovered apparently dead by a Rotherhithe lighterman, the woman being, in fact, only insensible, but subsequently died; whether at the inquest the Coroner was obliged to inform the lighterman, in reply to an application for a small reward to enable him to replace the clothes which had been ruined in the work, that as the woman had breathed after she had been landed, he was unable to award him any fee, as he could have done had she been found dead; and whether he will effect a change in the law or rule by which a payment is made for recovering a dead body, and no payment for saving life?

MR. ASQUITH: The Coroner has no power to award a fee except in the case of the recovery of dead bodies. The law can only be changed by legislation, and I have no intention of making any proposal on the subject.

## LABOUR STATISTICS.

SIR MICHAEL HICKS BEACH (Bristol, W.): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether any expenditure will be incurred in the course of the present financial year on account of the improved and extended system of collecting and publishing labour statistics recently announced by the President of the Board of Trade; and, if so, why no vote

for the purpose is included in the Supplementary Estimates?

**THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY** (Sir J. T. HIBBERT, Oldham): Nearly the whole of the additional staff in the new Labour Department are engaged from April 1 next. Any expenditure coming in course of payment during the present year will be met from savings on the Board of Trade Vote, which already contains provision for the existing Labour Department.

**SIR MICHAEL HICKS BEACH:** Would it not be more in accordance with the usual custom, seeing that considerable changes have been made in the Labour Department of the Board of Trade, to bring the matter under the review of Parliament in the shape of a Supplementary Estimate although only a small sum of additional expenditure is involved? Surely the Vote ought to be on the Estimates in order to enable Parliament to know exactly what is being done.

**SIR J. T. HIBBERT:** With respect to the new Labour Department full provision is made in the Estimates for next year, and the salaries which will be paid will date from April 1. A very small sum indeed is required up to the end of this year.

**MR. JAMES LOWTHER:** Is there money in hand to enable that to be met?

**SIR J. T. HIBBERT:** I am told so.

#### THE CARDIFF SAVINGS BANK.

**MR. HOWELL** (Bethnal Green, N.E.): I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he is aware that nine of the trustees and managers of the Cardiff Trustee Bank have paid £1,000 each towards the deficiency, and one £800; and that the Marquess of Bute has consented to contribute the sum of £1,800, or some similar sum, on the condition that this amount shall go in liquidation of the losses sustained by the Friendly Societies who were depositors; and whether he can tell the House when the distribution of the funds in hand will take place?

**THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER** (Sir W. HARCOURT, Derby): I am informed that a sum of £10,000 has been paid, or promised, by certain trustees and managers in settlement of the claims against them. I am also informed that the Marquess of Bute has

promised to pay the claims of the clubs and Friendly Societies in full. The amount required for this purpose is £2,789. The arrangements for the winding up of the liquidation and the distribution of the available funds have been unfortunately delayed by the deaths, in August last and on the 3rd instant, of two successive liquidators. Another liquidator will be appointed as soon as possible.

#### SILENT BOOTS FOR THE POLICE.

**SIR FREDERICK MILNER** (Notts., Bassetlaw): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he is aware that the police at Leeds and Bradford have for some time been supplied with Scaife's silent boots, and that they have been found to answer admirably, being silent, very durable, and breaking the weight of the foot when coming in contact with the flags; and whether he will consider the advisability of supplying the Metropolitan Police with these boots? May I further ask if the right hon. Gentleman is aware that 11 captures have been made by the police at Leeds and Bradford in the last three months which are attributed entirely to wearing these boots, of which I have here a pair? [Boots produced.]

**MR. ASQUITH:** Scaife's silent boots are worn by the Leeds police, but the Bradford police are given an allowance and boot themselves. I understand they were tried by the Metropolitan Police Force, but did not find favour with the men, and a Board reported that they could not recommend them.

#### THE ACCOMMODATION AT THE HOUSE.

**COLONEL HOWARD VINCENT:** I beg to ask the First Commissioner of Works if, having regard to the yearly increasing pressure of Parliamentary duties, he can make arrangements to restore to the 600 unofficial Members, and to deputations of electors desiring to confer with them, the Conference and Correspondence Rooms of which they have been administratively deprived by removing the Public Bill Office elsewhere, or otherwise?

**THE FIRST COMMISSIONER OF WORKS** (Mr. SHAW LEFEVRE, Bradford, Central): I am extremely anxious to do something to improve the accommodation for conferences. The two rooms

now set apart for conferences are rather larger than those previously devoted strictly to that purpose, but are not so conveniently placed, and one of them is invaded by the secretaries of private Members. The Assistant Serjeant-at-Arms informs me that there has been a demand for conferences far beyond the experience of any preceding Session, and that often he has to provide Committee Rooms for several deputations; but these rooms can only be used after 5 p.m. I have recently discovered three rooms which might, I think, be appropriated for deputations, if hon. Members should think them convenient. They are now occupied by the Railway Commission, for administrative purposes. They can be approached from St. Stephen's Hall. The Railway Commissioners are there only by sufferance and might be provided for elsewhere. These rooms belong technically to the House of Lords, but I think arrangements might probably be made for using them for conferences or deputations. I will ask hon. Members to look at these rooms and communicate with me on the subject.

#### SWEETENED CIGARETTES.

**MR. WILLOX:** I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether cigarettes of foreign manufacture, and artificially sweetened, may be lawfully imported into this country; and, if so, under what Customs or Excise Regulations such import takes place?

**SIR W. HARCOURT:** The importation of cigarettes of foreign manufacture and artificially sweetened is prohibited under Section 42 of the Customs Consolidation Act, 1876 (39 Vict., cap. 36), and the Manufactured Tobacco Act, 1863 (28 Vict., cap. 7, section 10).

#### VOLUNTEER ENGINEERS FOR EDINBURGH.

**MR. PARKER SMITH** (Lanark, Partick): On behalf of my hon. Friend the Member for the Western Division of Edinburgh, I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether he can state the reasons why permission has been refused for the formation of a corps of Volunteer Fortress Engineers in Edinburgh; and whether he is prepared to have the question re-considered?

*Mr. Shaw Lefevre*

**\*MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN:** I can trace no such proposal for Edinburgh. Probably the noble Lord confuses Edinburgh with Leith. When, in 1888, it was sought to establish in Leith a Corps of Volunteer Engineers, great opposition was made by the officers commanding Volunteers Corps in the neighbourhood. I am now informed that that opposition is withdrawn; but the information did not reach me until it was too late to consider the question in connection with this year's Estimates.

#### MEDALS FOR THE WUNTHOO OPERATIONS.

**MR. JEFFREYS** (Hants, Basingstoke): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether it is intended that the troops who were engaged in the operations in the Wunthoo District in Upper Burmah in 1891 shall receive the Indian medal?

**\*MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN:** The question is at present under consideration.

#### COMMUNICATION WITH THE ROSS-SHIRE COAST.

**MR. WEIR** (Ross and Cromarty): I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland whether he is aware that there is only weekly communication by steamer with Ullapool, Aultbea, Poolewe, and other populous districts on the west coast of the mainland of Ross-shire; that transit by road, a distance of upwards of 30 miles, is so costly as to paralyse the fishing industry; and whether more frequent steamer communication, road trams, or otherwise, will be established in these districts?

**SIR G. TREVELYAN:** The Government are not at present prepared to augment the subsidy given in respect of the experiment now being made as regards steam communication for the benefit of the Western Highlands and Islands. As regards other communications, the hon. Member is also aware that the sum of £3,000 has recently been granted to the County of Ross and Cromarty for the construction of roads and footpaths, and £15,000 for the road across the Teues, which is in the County of Ross.

# THE DEER FOREST COMMISSIONERS AT ALINE.

**MR. WEIR:** I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland whether, in view of the fact that Lady Matheson, the owner of the Aline deer forest, Island of Lewis, has refused permission to the crofter delegates appointed by the people of the district to inspect the forest of Aline for the purpose of ascertaining what land is suitable for crofters' holdings, and preparing evidence for the Deer Forest Commission, they will be protected from prosecution on their visiting the forest without the authority of Lady Matheson?

**SIR G. TREVELYAN:** The Crofters' Commission will no doubt inquire for themselves into all cases of this description. I have already called Sheriff Brand's notice to this case.

## PUBLIC WORKS IN THE HIGHLANDS.

**MR. WEIR:** I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland whether a person of energy and business qualifications will be appointed without delay to manage the Department created under The Highlands and Islands (Scotland) Works Act, 1891, with the view of advancing projects sanctioned by the Department, and expending the sums granted in aid of useful works, before the close of the financial year?

**SIR G. TREVELYAN:** The Scottish Office is now in correspondence with the War Office regarding a successor for Colonel Malcolm, their Consulting Engineer for Harbours in the Highlands and Islands. The hon. Member is mistaken if he supposes that it is due to any want of energy on Colonel Malcolm's part that greater progress has not been made in carrying out these works. The Act requires certain formalities to be complied with which demand much time. Of the eight different works entertained by the Scottish Office in the County of Ross and Cromarty, seven are at this moment under the consideration of the County Council, for whom I cannot answer.

## JUSTICES OF THE PEACE.

**MR. WEIR:** I beg to ask the Lord Advocate whether the Act of 1609 (Scotland), so far as it relates to Justices

of the Peace, is still in force; and, if not, when it was repealed?

**\*THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. B. BALFOUR, Clackmannan):** The Act of 1609, cap. 7, to which I understand my hon. Friend refers, provides that in every shire within this Kingdom there shall be yearly appointed by His Majesty some godly, wise, and virtuous gentlemen of good quality, means, and report, making residence within the same for the purpose of assisting to prevent the reviving of the deadly feuds which the Preamble of the Act states had previously been very prevalent. I am not prepared to say whether that Act has been expressly repealed; but I think there can be no doubt that it has fallen into desuetude since the passing of the later Acts dealing with the appointment of Justices, and the cessation of the causes which appear to have led to its enactment.

**MR. WEIR:** I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland whether steps will be taken to remove from the Roll of Justices of the Peace for Ross and Cromarty the name of John Charles William Paul Graham, late of Drynie, who has no property in the county and resides abroad?

**SIR G. TREVELYAN:** Lord Chancellors have not considered non-residence as a reason for removing a Justice from the Bench, and an exception would not be made in a special case.

## INVERASDALE PIER.

**MR. WEIR:** I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland whether the contract for the boat pier at Inverasdale has been signed; if not, what is the cause of the delay; and whether this pier was sanctioned by Colonel Malcolm, Chief of the Highlands and Islands Works Department, upwards of seven months since?

**SIR G. TREVELYAN:** The contract for the boat pier at Inverasdale has not yet been signed. The plan was generally sanctioned by Colonel Malcolm last June, but was returned to the County Council to carry out some suggested alterations. It was not received back from the County Council until the 8th December. It was referred again to Colonel Malcolm, and approved by him on the 14th December. It was passed on to the Board of Trade, as required by the Act, and by them referred to the County Council on the 16th January, in order that certain requirements should be com-

plied with. It has rested with the County Council ever since. The hon. Member will see that out of nine months the matter was in the hands of the Scotch Office for a week, and in the hands of the Government, in all five weeks, and the rest of the time with the County Council—where it is still. I wish the hon. Member would wake them up.

#### THE ORKNEY CROFTERS.

MR. LYELL (Orkney and Shetland): I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland whether he is aware that the Crofter Commissioners have not yet visited South Ronaldshay, in Orkney; and will he arrange that the large number of applications for a fair rent by crofters in this island shall be heard at the earliest opportunity?

SIR G. TREVELYAN: The Commission, as I am aware, has not yet visited South Ronaldshay. The Chairman reports that he hopes to be able to do so before the end of June.

#### THE SCOTCH OATH.

DR. FARQUHARSON (Aberdeenshire, W.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he is aware that certain magistrates and coroners have refused to allow the adoption of the statutory usage of administering the Oath in Courts of Law with uplifted hand, in the form and manner in which the Oath is usually administered in Scotland; whether he will direct that the provisions of Section 5 of the Oaths Act of 1888 shall be universally observed; and whether he will issue a Circular or make an official statement on the subject in order that individuals claiming their legal rights may not be put to serious inconvenience?

MR. ASQUITH: By an unfortunate omission the Oaths Act of 1888 does not define the form and manner in which the Oath is usually administered in Scotland, and it is possible that some magistrates and coroners are not acquainted with the Scotch procedure. I am about to issue a Circular containing the necessary information, and it will be sent to all Justices' clerks and coroners.

*Sir G. Trevelyan*

#### PENSIONS FOR SCHOOL TEACHERS.

SIR RICHARD PAGET: I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if, in view of the number of applications for pensions by elementary school teachers of long standing, and of the small number of pensions granted hitherto, he will be good enough to inform the House what sum he proposes to devote during the coming year for the purpose of providing pensions for teachers worn out in the public service, irrespective of the larger scheme for State-aided pensions?

SIR W. HARCOURT: I answered this question on Saturday. I said I was in communication with the Vice President of the Council and not yet prepared to give a definite reply.

SIR R. PAGET: This is not exactly the same question. It refers to the older teachers from whom the Vice President stated the other day that a sum was to be set apart by the Chancellor of the Exchequer in the present year.

SIR W. HARCOURT: I must ask for notice of the question.

#### THE EMPLOYERS' LIABILITY BILL.

SIR FRANCIS POWELL (Wigan): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he is prepared to state to the House, before the Second Reading of the Employers' Liability Bill, what are the Amendments which he proposes to make in the Third Clause of that Bill in order to correct inaccuracies in the text as printed?

MR. WOODS (Lancashire, Ince): I wish to ask the right hon. Gentleman if, in the event of receiving a requisition from Trades Unions all over the country, he would be prepared to strike out Clauses 3 and 4 of the Bill?

MR. ASQUITH: I cannot answer that without consideration. I cannot at present state definitively the precise verbal Amendments which will have to be made in the third clause. Their general effect will be to give the Court power, in ordering a payment to the employer from the Mutual Insurance Fund, to have regard to the amount of the damages recovered, the extent of the employer's contribution to the fund, and all the circumstances of the case.

### MILK RATES ON THE GREAT WESTERN RAILWAY.

**MR. H. L. W. LAWSON** (Gloucester, Cirencester) : I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether his attention has been called to the large increase of rates for the carriage of milk on the Stratford-on-Avon branch of the Great Western Railway Company ; whether he is aware that it presses with peculiar severity on those farmers and traders who send small quantities to the big towns ; and whether he will make further representations to this company, to prevent them thus injuring the interests of the agricultural community under "The Railway and Canal Traffic Act, 1888" ?

**MR. MUNDELLA** : I have received a communication on the subject referred to from the General Manager of the Great Western Railway, from which it appears that a special scale of rates was, prior to the 1st January, 1893, in force in the Stratford-on-Avon district, which was lower than the scale in force on any other part of the Great Western system, and that these have been slightly raised in some cases with a view of establishing uniformity of charge. The total value of the milk traffic from Stratford-on-Avon for the year 1892 was £32 16s. 9d. The Manager adds that the revision of the milk rates carried out on the company's system will result in a substantial loss of revenue.

### THE RIVETERS IN DEVONPORT DOCKYARD.

**MR. KEARLEY** : I beg to ask the Civil Lord of the Admiralty what has been the percentage earned in excess over day pay by riveters in Devonport Dockyard, week by week, since the all-round reduction was made in November last, in piece-work prices ; and how such percentage compares with that earned for a corresponding period prior to such reduction ?

**THE CIVIL LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY** (Mr. E. ROBERTSON, Dundee) : The details asked for cannot conveniently be given in an answer in this House, but I am willing to show them to my hon. Friend. I may, however, say that the percentage in question, which fell considerably immediately after the reduction mentioned, has greatly improved

lately, and may now be considered satisfactory.

**MR. KEARLEY** : May I ask whether the percentage has reached the Trades Union percentage (25) ?

**MR. E. ROBERTSON** : I think the hon. Member had better wait till he sees the paper.

### THE SALE OF REVOLVERS.

**SIR FREDERICK MILNER** : I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if his attention has been called to the case of Thomas De Groat, tried this week at the Central Criminal Court for shooting at William Newman with a revolver, and to the opinion expressed by Mr. Justice Hawkins that Parliament should place the same restrictions on the sale of revolvers as they do in the case of poisons ; and whether, in view of the numerous accidents that have taken place, he will take steps to prevent the indiscriminate sale of these deadly weapons ?

**MR. ASQUITH** : My attention has been previously called to the case of Thomas De Groat, tried last week at the Central Criminal Court for shooting at a man with a revolver. But the general question of placing restrictions on the sale of revolvers has been engaging my serious consideration ; and I am collecting information in the hope that some legislation on the subject may be found to be practicable.

### TRADES UNION BALANCE SHEETS.

**SIR FREDERICK MILNER** : I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether any member of a Trade Union can, under the Trades Union Act, claim to be supplied annually with a balance sheet ; and if he is aware that the officials of the West Yorkshire Miners Union have refused to supply balance sheets to several applicants ?

**MR. WOODS** : Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that in consequence of the lavish distribution of the West Yorkshire Miners Union balance sheets of the last three years *The Sheffield Daily Telegraph* has had its pages flooded with financial arguments relative to them, and that they are used solely for political purposes ?

**MR. ASQUITH** : I am not acquainted with the subject to which the hon. Member refers. In reply to the question



on the Paper, I have to say that by Section 16 of the Trades Unions Act, 1871, every member of and depositor in any Trade Union is entitled to receive, on application to the Treasurer or Secretary of that Trade Union, a copy of its general statement of receipts, funds, effects, and expenditure without making any payment for the same. I am not aware that the officials of the West Yorkshire Miners' Union have refused to supply a copy of its general statement to any member or depositor. If they had, they and the Trade Union are each liable under the same section to a penalty not exceeding £5 for each offence. I have just received a telegram from the Secretary stating that they have thousands of last year's balance-sheets in stock, but that no one asks for them.

#### SALMON FISHING IN THE SOLWAY FIRTH.

**MR. JAMES WILLIAM LOWTHER** (Cumberland, Penrith): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he is aware that considerable discontent exists amongst the fishermen on the coast of Cumberland adjacent to the Solway Firth as to the unequal terms under which they and the Scotch fishermen respectively carry on their industry of salmon fishing in the same firth; whether he is aware that this feeling is partly due to the difference in practice between the Scotch and English shores of the Solway as to (1) the size of the mesh of the nets in use; (2) the annual, and (3) the weekly close times in force; whether these points of difference and of dissatisfaction could be allayed by legislation which would assimilate the practice on these three points, leaving to a future occasion the solution of the more difficult question of the extinction of the fixed engines on the Scotch shore; and whether he would confer with the Secretary for Scotland with a view to framing a Bill which would carry out this limited object?

**MR. MUNDELLA:** I quite recognise that in narrow waters such as those of the Solway Firth it is desirable that the fishery regulations should be the same throughout. But in this case serious difficulty arises from the fundamental difference between the English and Scotch law relating to salmon fisheries. I do not think that

it would be convenient to deal with a part of the subject only, and it would certainly be impossible to legislate upon it this Session.

#### POST OFFICE APPOINTMENTS.

**MR. SAMUEL SMITH** (Flintshire): I beg to ask the Postmaster General whether it is a compulsory rule that candidates for situations in the Post Office, after passing the Civil Service examinations, have to comply with the order of the medical officer to have such teeth extracted as he may require, sometimes as many as six or seven, without any guarantee that they will then be accepted; whether without the extraction of such teeth they are rejected; whether he is aware that there exists widespread indignation at this compulsory teeth extraction; and whether he will lay upon the Table of the House the regulations dealing with the medical requirements and bodily fitness of candidates, and also the number of persons rejected by the medical officers during the last 12 months?

**MR. A. MORLEY:** The medical officers are instructed to report specially with regard to the sight, the hearing, and the teeth of candidates for appointment, the state of the teeth being regarded as an indication of the state of the health, and, where they are bad, as prejudicially affecting the health. If they are out of order the medical officer withholds his certificate, but he does not decide what operation, if any, is necessary. All that the medical officer does is to express himself either satisfied or dissatisfied with the condition in which the teeth are; and if he is dissatisfied, the candidate, if he wishes still to be considered as such, is informed that he must see a properly-qualified dentist. The selection of the dentist is left to the candidate himself. There are no specific regulations on the subject of the medical examination of candidates for appointment; but the object is to exclude those who are likely to come early on the pension list, and those in whose case physical defect or disease is likely to interfere with the proper discharge of their duties. As regards the number of rejections, if my hon. Friend will be content with a Return of those which during the last 12 months have taken place at the General Post Office, London, I would obtain the figures for

*Mr. Asquith*

him, but it would take some time to get them for the whole country. My attention has been called by my hon. Friend to a case in which the decision arrived at by the medical officer caused some dissatisfaction, and I am considering the whole question with the object of seeing whether some less stringent regulations may not be sufficient.

#### ACCIDENT AT LIVERPOOL STREET STATION.

**MR. GROVE** (West Ham, N.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether his attention has been called to an accident which occurred last week at Liverpool Street Station, by which a man met his death by falling from a gantry not protected by a rail; and whether it is illegal to erect scaffolding above a certain height without sufficient protection; and, if it is, whether he will take steps to make such a practice penal?

**MR. ASQUITH**: I have inquired into the case, and find that the accident occurred upon a staging erected by the Railway Company on their own property by contractors who were making a new roof for the station. The Board of Trade appears to have no jurisdiction in the matter, nor have the Local Authorities, whose power to regulate the height and structure of hoards and scaffolds is confined to those which are erected on or above public ways. It would thus seem that the law was not violated. I cannot at present undertake to legislate on the subject, but I may point out that if the Notice of Accidents Bill is passed all such occurrences will be liable to become the subject of public inquiry.

#### SHEERNESS GUNNERY SCHOOL.

**MR. KNATCHBULL-HUGESSEN** (Kent, Faversham): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty what steps have been taken to expend the £3,000 voted in the Naval Estimates for 1892-93 for the development of the Gunnery School at Sheerness; and why no provision is made for its further development in this year's Estimates?

**MR. E. ROBERTSON**: The Gunnery School has been established at Sheerness, and the present Board intend to carry out a scheme for providing the necessary ground and buildings for its proper development. The scheme first proposed had to be modified; and, pending further

consideration, it was not possible to spend the £3,000 voted in 1892-93, and it was thought better to reconsider the whole scheme.

#### SCOTCH CHURCH COLLECTIONS.

**MR. THOMAS SHAW** (Hawick, &c.): I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland whether his attention has been called to the contravention by the Kirk Sessions of the parish churches of Scotland of the provisions of the Poor Law Act of 1845, which ordain the application of the ordinary church collections for behoof of the poor of the parish; whether he is aware that these established churches have diverted to other purposes in years past sums amounting to about £30,000 per annum, or altogether over £665,000 of this poor fund; what has been done by the Board of Supervision to prevent this course of action; and whether the Government will take steps to prevent further encroachment upon the rights of the Scottish poor by means of the above-mentioned practice?

**SIR G. TREVELYAN**: I cannot say that the provisions of the Poor Law Act, 1845, ordain the application of the ordinary church collections for behoof of the poor of the parish. It might be contended that they do so by implication, but the view generally taken is that they merely alter the administrative body, and do not change the purposes to which church collections were previously applicable, and it was previously the practice to apply part of them to purposes other than the relief of the poor. It is the case that large sums derived from church collections have been applied to purposes other than the relief of the poor. The Board of Supervision have regularly published the results of the Reports furnished to them annually by Kirk Sessions, as required by the Act, relative to the application of monies arising from church collections, and it was open to any persons having interest to take steps for testing the legality of the application, if they thought fit. The case does not appear to be one for interference on the part of the Government.

**MR. T. SHAW**: May I ask the right hon. Gentleman if he is aware it has been repeatedly decided in Scotland that the Act of 1845 expressly provides for the application of this money to the poor of Scotland?

SIR G. TREVELYAN : I have had consult certain legal advisers, and that is not the view they take. A conference could easily be arranged between them and the hon. Member, and I should like to know what comes of it.

CHATHAM DOCKYARD.

VISCOUNT CRANBORNE (Rochester) : I beg to ask the Civil Lord of the Admiralty whether a new scale of pay came in force in March, 1891, in Chatham Dockyard, under which all skilled labourers received an increase of pay averaging from 3s. to 5s. per week per man ; and whether towards the close of last month a number of drillers, iron caulkers, and rivetters were taken off, owing to slackness of work, and put on to other skilled work instead, but their wages were reduced to the old rate of pay, although working the same number of hours and continuing to be employed as skilled labourers ?

\*MR. E. ROBERTSON : The answer to the first part of the question is, Yes. It is true that a small number of men, 33 in all, were last month transferred to other work consequent on slackness in the class of work on which they were employed, but of these only 13 drillers had to fall back to ordinary labourers, the others continuing to receive pay as skilled men. The system of interchangeability of employment prevents the necessity for discharging men.

THE KELLHAM ROLLING MILL COMPANY.

MR. KEIR-HARDIE (West Ham, S.) : I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he is aware that on 21st January, 1893, the Kellham Rolling Mill Company, Limited, Sheffield, sent a notice to each of their *employés*, signed by the secretary and manager, informing them that unless they joined the yard club they would be dismissed ; whether such action infringes the provisions of the Truck Act ; and what action he proposes to take in the matter ?

MR. ASQUITH : The answer to the first paragraph of the hon. Member's question is in the affirmative. I am advised that employers are entitled, on a revocable authority of the *employés*, to pay over a part of the wages to a sick

and benefit club, but that a contract between employers and employed to make membership of such a club a condition of employment is illegal. In this case there clearly appears to have been an infringement of the Truck Act, and the employers will be warned accordingly.

THE CHANNEL TUNNEL.

MR. HENEAGE (Great Grimsby) : I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade, in view of the fact that for the last ten years it has been customary for the Board of Trade to give official notice of opposition to the Channel Tunnel scheme, if he will explain why the usual notice has not been given during the present Session ?

MR. MUNDELLA : I have nothing to add to the answer I gave on Saturday.

WAGES IN GOVERNMENT ESTABLISHMENTS.

SIR JOHN GORST : I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what steps Her Majesty's Government propose to take to give effect to the Resolution of the House in reference to Naval Establishments of the 6th inst., and to the declaration made in reference to the Government Establishments in general by the Secretary of State for War in the course of the Debate which took place in the House on that Resolution ?

\*MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN : My right hon. Friend has asked me to reply to this question. I stated in the Debate referred to that as soon as the facts were fully ascertained action in application of the principle adopted by the House would be taken in each public Department concerned, where a necessity for it was disclosed.

RE-ADDRESSED PARCELS AND BOOK PACKETS.

MR. JOHN WILSON (Lanark, Govan) : I beg to ask the Postmaster General whether it is the case that parcels, circulars, and book packets, owing to removals, that have to be re-addressed, are taxed to the extent of the original postage, while re-addressed letters are delivered free ; whether, as both the public and Local Authorities have remonstrated against this charge, he will place such packages on the same footing as letters ; whether he is aware that in the majority of cases the public refuse to take delivery

of such packages, which have ultimately to be returned free of charge to the senders; and whether he will consider the advisability of relieving the public from this charge?

MR. A. MORLEY: The question to which the hon. Member refers was very carefully considered by the late Government, and it was decided not to permit parcels, circulars, and book packets to be re-addressed gratis. I think it would be very undesirable to facilitate the re-addressing and further transmission without charge of what would amount to tons of matter through the post by relieving the addressee of all charges, and I am not prepared to recommend a change in the present practice.

#### THE CASE OF HENRY BRIERLEY.

MR. SCHWANN (Manchester, N.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to the case of Henry Brierley, mentioned in *The Manchester Guardian* of 8th instant, who was locked up for parading the streets of Manchester with a brass band and soliciting donations from passers by, and discharged on giving an undertaking not to commit the alleged offence again, is he aware that Brierley is the Chairman of 5 District of the Amalgamated Card and Blowing Room Operatives' Association, and that he and several other officials of that Association were collecting funds for the men who had been locked out; is it an offence for English operatives to collect voluntary contributions in the manner described, when it is not alleged that any riotous conduct took place or obstruction was caused; and is he aware that on the 1st May traffic is suspended for several hours throughout the busiest portion of the city by a May-day procession of vehicles and horses, and also on Whit Monday by processions of school children; and is there any reason why some latitude should not be given to proceedings like those referred to in the first paragraph, in the exceptional circumstances at present existing in the cotton manufacturing district?

MR. ASQUITH: With regard to Henry Brierley, I have been promised a Report from the Magistrates after Wednesday next, and with regard to the May-day procession I am in com-

munication with the Chief Constable of Manchester on the subject. Perhaps my hon. Friend would put this question down for Friday, so as to enable me time to receive the Reports.

#### LIMERICK POST ARRANGEMENTS.

MR. O'KEEFFE (Limerick): I beg to ask the Postmaster General if any progress has been made between the Irish Postal Authorities and the Waterford and Limerick Railway Company to extend to the City of Limerick the benefit of the new accelerated mail system to the South of Ireland?

MR. A. MORLEY: Some progress is being made with the negotiations on this subject, but the terms asked by the Railway Company are still thought too high. I shall be glad if a satisfactory agreement can be come to, but I am not at present sanguine of success.

#### THE EVICTED TENANTS COMMISSION REPORT.

MR. BARTLEY (Islington, N.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland on what day the order was given to the printers to print the Report of the Evicted Tenants Commission for distribution to Members?

\*MR. J. MORLEY: The Report of the Evicted Tenants Commission was presented on Thursday last. It was sent, I am informed, in a final state for press on the following afternoon to the printers in Dublin, who received telegraphic instructions that day to provide the copies forthwith for distribution to Members. The matter, however, is not in my Department, but comes under the regulations of the Stationery Department.

MR. CRILLY (Mayo, N.): Was not a copy of this Report lying for some days in the Vote Office, and was there seen and read by many hon. Members?

MR. BARTLEY: Is it not a fact there was a delay of 15 days after the Report was sent in before it was printed for circulation? Can the right hon. Gentleman account for the delay?

\*MR. J. MORLEY: It is easy to do so. The House, I supposed, would prefer to have the evidence along with the Report, but owing to a strong desire afterwards expressed by hon. Members to see the Report without the evidence, in order that the discussion upon it

might be taken on an early day, it was thought better to present the Report alone. I am not quite sure about February 15 being the correct date.

**MR. BARTLEY:** Is it not a fact that the Report was submitted to the Chief Secretary for his consideration before it was officially reported?

**\*MR. J. MORLEY:** I do not know what the hon. Member means by "officially reported." The first that I saw of the Report was when it was printed in the final shape exactly as hon. Members have it. It was submitted by me in the ordinary course to the Lord Lieutenant.

#### CIVIL EMPLOYMENT FOR SOLDIERS.

**SIR JAMES FERGUSSON** (Manchester, N.E.): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether the Committee sitting at the Treasury upon the Employment of Soldiers in Civil Departments has reported; whether he will lay that Report upon the Table of the House; and what Departments have, as yet, offered places preferentially to soldiers?

**\*SIR J. T. HIBBERT:** The Departmental Committee on Messengers, &c. in Public Departments has not yet presented its Report, which has been delayed by the illness of one of the Members of the Committee.

#### THE NEW EDUCATION CODE.

**MR. PARKER:** I beg to ask the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education when the new Education Code will be ready for distribution?

**MR. ACLAND:** The Education Code is delayed for a few days owing to the necessity of considering one or two important matters, especially the new arrangements for the grant under the Code for superannuation of teachers, but I hope it will be in the hands of Members in a week or two.

#### ILLITERATE VOTERS IN IRELAND.

**MR. WEBSTER:** I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland if he will institute an inquiry as to the reason why, at the last General Election, in Ireland 84,919 electors voted under the illiterate clauses of the Ballot Act, or 21·50 per cent.; and whether in England the number was 46,109, or 1·24

per cent.; and in Scotland 4,577, or only ·98 per cent.?

**\*MR. WEBB** (Waterford, W.): Before the right hon. Gentleman answers the question, may I ask him if it is not the fact that the proportion of illiterate voters voting in Ulster was 23 per cent., while the proportion voting in the rest of Ireland was 20 per cent.; whether, in Belfast, it was not 8·4 per cent. against 2·45 per cent. in Dublin; whether, in Londonderry, it was not 17 per cent. against 9 per cent. in Waterford; whether, in Newry, it was not 17 per cent.——?

**MR. SPEAKER:** Order, order! That is not a question; it partakes rather of the character of an argument.

**\*MR. J. MORLEY:** My knowledge does not extend to all these details, I am afraid; and I cannot promise to institute an inquiry of this kind. I could not say what its course should be, or see what useful result would be obtained.

**MR. WEBSTER:** I shall raise this question on the Estimates.

#### THE DISTRIBUTION OF THE ROYAL IRISH CONSTABULARY.

**MR. WYNDHAM:** I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he will give the distribution in various counties on the 1st March of the reserve force, Royal Irish Constabulary, the extra force at the requisition of Magistrates, and the extra force in counties proclaimed?

**\*MR. J. MORLEY:** (a) Reserve force temporarily serving in counties and cities, &c., is as follows:—Belfast City, 70; Clare County, 12; Cork County (East Riding), 20; Kerry, 5; Kildare, 12—total, 119. The 12 men serving in Kildare are stationed at the Curragh, and 11 of the 20 men in Cork (East Riding) are stationed at Haulbowline Dockyards. These men are, strictly speaking, not employed on any of the ordinary county police work. (b) Extra force appointed on requisition of Magistrates (Section 12 of 6 and 7 William IV., cap. 13) is as follows:—Kilkenny, 10; Longford, 15; Meath, 10; Sligo, 4; Tipperary (South Riding), 65; Waterford, 16; Westmeath, 18; Wexford, 25—total, 163. (c) Extra force (Section 13 of 6 and 7 William IV., cap. 13) in counties proclaimed as disturbed is as follows:—Clare, 109; Cork (East

Riding), 89; Cork (West Riding), 37; Galway (East Riding), 65; Kerry, 130; Limerick, 86; Roscommon, 5; Waterford, 4—total, 525.

#### THE EVICTED TENANTS COMMISSION.

**MR. WILLIAM KENNY** (Dublin, St. Stephen's Green): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether the solicitor who represented the Evicted Tenants before the Evicted Tenants Commission, and to whom the Treasury sanctioned a fee of £50 for his services, was Mr. Kilbride; and if he will lay upon the Table of the House the Correspondence between the Evicted Tenants Commission and the Treasury as to the allowance to Mr. Kilbride of the fee of £50 for his services?

**MR. BODKIN** (Roscommon, N.): Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that payments of this kind have to be approved by the Taxing Master, and what was done in this case?

**\*MR. J. MORLEY**: I believe the usual course was followed in this case. I may add that the payment of £50 was not to Mr. Kilbride, but to a gentleman named O'Connor, who had assisted in collecting evidence on the Massereene Estate. Mr. Kilbride's case is at present under the consideration of the Treasury. The correspondence is Departmental, and it would be contrary to practice to lay it on the Table in either of the two cases.

**MR. MACARTNEY**: Was he employed by the Commission?

**\*MR. J. MORLEY**: I cannot say, but I think he was.

#### THE NILE VALLEY RAILWAY.

**SIR WILLIAM MARRIOTT** (Brighton): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether Her Majesty's Government have any information of the intention of the Egyptian Authorities to extend the railway up the Nile Valley towards the Egyptian frontier, and if any Correspondence has passed between the two Governments upon the subject; and, if so, whether there is any objection to laying such Correspondence upon the Table of the House?

**\*THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS** (Sir E. GREY, Northumberland, Berwick): The last information we have

on the subject was received in February, 1892. It was then stated that the Upper Egypt Railway was being continued to Girzeh, and was expected to be finished in about a year. As far as Her Majesty's Government are aware, nothing has been decided as to any further extension.

#### THE DISTRESS IN THE COUNTRY.

**MR. KEIR-HARDIE**: I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board whether he intends to submit a measure to Parliament during the present Session for the purpose of aiding Local Authorities to effectively deal with the severe distress prevailing all over the country, in consequence of large numbers of men being out of employment; and will he state what are the powers at present possessed by Boards of Guardians for setting able-bodied destitute people to work?

**\*MR. H. H. FOWLER**: A Circular Letter was issued by me in November last to Local Authorities with respect to works in districts where there was exceptional distress in consequence of want of employment. Local Authorities have already the powers required for the execution of the works which are necessary for their district, and further legislation for the purpose does not appear to me to be required.

#### THE BUDGET.

**MR. KEIR-HARDIE**: I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he contemplates, in connection with the Budget proposals for next year, such a re-arrangement of the system of taxation as is known as a graduated Income Tax, by means of which the contributions to the Revenue, local and Imperial, would bear a relative proportion to income, and thus afford a much-needed relief to wage-earners and persons of small income; also whether he will make such provision in the Budget Estimates for next year as would enable the Local Government Board to make grants to any Board of Guardians, Town or County Council, or committee of responsible citizens willing to acquire land or other property, and undertake the responsibility of organising the unemployed in Home Colonies, and affording them the opportunity of providing the necessaries of life for themselves and those dependent on them?

SIR W. HARCOURT: To these two questions I am afraid I must say that the time has not yet come when I can divulge the secrets of the Budget.

#### POLICE PAY.

MR. KEIR-HARDIE: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether the policemen on duty outside the entrances to the Houses of Parliament, including the crossings, have the same allowance as those on duty inside the gates; and, if not, whether he will consider the propriety of granting them such allowance for the future?

MR. ASQUITH: The police on duty at the gates and crossings outside the Houses of Parliament receive no extra pay unless they are detained over nine hours, when they get an extra 5s. a day in accordance with the regulations of the Service. This duty differs in no respect from the ordinary divisional work, and is altogether distinct from that performed by the staff attached to the Houses of Parliament.

#### SCIENCE AND ART GRANTS IN IRELAND.

MR. MACARTNEY: I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether any provision is made in the Government of Ireland Bill for the continuance of the grants for science and art under the Science and Art Department; and, if so, in which clause?

SIR W. HARCOURT: May I be allowed, in the absence of the Prime Minister, who, I regret to say, is confined to the house by a severe cold, to answer the question? No provision is made in the Bill for the continuance of the grants. The matter will, of course, depend on the Irish Government.

#### THE LAND QUESTION IN WALES.

MR. REES - DAVIES (Pembroke-shire): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury when the names of the Commissioners and the terms of the Reference will be issued to inquire into the land question in Wales?

SIR W. HARCOURT: It is hoped this will be done in a few days.

#### THE GOVERNMENT AND THE CHANNEL TUNNEL.

MR. HENEAGE: I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether the

Government intend to move the rejection of the Channel Tunnel Bill when it is put down for Second Reading, or whether they will leave that duty to a private Member?

SIR W. HARCOURT: The question has already been answered by the President of the Board of Trade, who said that the matter would be left open for the decision of the House.

MR. HENEAGE: I wish to know what these words mean. I ask my right hon. Friend a distinct question—whether the Government will move the rejection of the Bill or leave it to a private Member? I only want an answer, yes or no.

SIR W. HARCOURT: The Government will not move the rejection of the Bill.

MR. BARTLEY: Arising out of that answer, I wish to ask whether the Government will support the Bill?

#### SCOTCH BUSINESS.

MR. ROBERT WALLACE (Edinburgh, E.): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether Government will arrange to secure for Scotch Business its due proportion of the attention of the House during the present Session; whether it will be necessary for that purpose to hold a series of Saturday Sittings; and whether, in that event, the Government will undertake not to restrict Scotch Business exclusively to Saturdays, but will assign to it its proper share in the advantages of normal Parliamentary time?

SIR W. HARCOURT: The Government will do its best to forward Scotch Business, but are not able to give the assurance which the hon. Member desires.

SIR J. FERGUSSON: I wish to ask whether the Government will give due notice of their intention to introduce Saturday Sittings?

SIR W. HARCOURT: Most certainly.

#### THE HOME RULE BILL.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR (Manchester, E.): The Prime Minister on Saturday said something about making a statement to-day before going into Committee. In his absence, from a cause which we all regret, will the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer make the statement now?

SIR W. HARCOURT : As regards business this week the Government will endeavour to make what progress they can in Committee of Supply. The Prime Minister desires me to say that, in consequence of the delay in the progress of Supply, it is obvious that the discussion on the Home Rule Bill cannot be considered this week. The Prime Minister, therefore, wishes me to say that the Debate will not be taken before Easter, but it will be taken the first thing after the vacation.

MR. JUSTIN MCCARTHY (Longford, N.) : I should like, with the indulgence of the House, to say one or two words with reference to the information we have just heard. I would ask the right hon. Gentleman whether, considering the understanding that was arrived at as to proceeding with the Home Rule Bill before Easter, it is not still possible, even taking into account the important financial business to be done, and the unprecedented difficulties which we know have been, and are, to be placed in the way of the Government, to reconsider the decision which has been arrived at, and bring on the Home Rule Bill some time before Easter.

SIR W. HARCOURT : I have stated the decision at which after great reluctance the Government have arrived.

MR. SEXTON (Kerry, N.) : I wish to ask the right hon. Gentleman whether the reply which he has just given precludes the possibility, in the event of the necessary progress being made with Supply before the requisite date, of the opening of the Debate on the Home Rule Bill before Easter ?

SIR W. HARCOURT : The Government are of opinion that it would not be advantageous to commence the Debate unless there were a fair and even a clear prospect of closing it before Easter. I think everyone who has any Parliamentary experience will agree that to have an interval in a Debate upon the Second Reading of a Bill is not a good method of dealing with that Bill. Therefore, unless we thought we had a fair and reasonable prospect of closing the Debate, we do not think it would be advantageous or expedient to open the Debate and then discontinue it because of the Recess.

MR. SEXTON : In the event of the opening of the Debate being deferred till after Easter, is it the intention of the Government then to proceed from day to day with it ?

SIR W. HARCOURT : Certainly, that is our view. It will be the very first business after the Easter holidays.

## PRIVILEGE.

### PARLIAMENT — OBSTRUCTION.

#### A QUESTION OF PRIVILEGE.

MR. HANBURY (Preston) : Mr. Speaker, I desire to call the attention of the House to a letter in *The Westminster Gazette*.

MR. LABOUCHERE (Northampton) : Will the hon. Gentleman allow me for one moment ?

MR. HANBURY : The letter appeared in the *Westminster Gazette* this afternoon, and it would appear to constitute a grave breach of the Privileges of this House. It charges a whole Party in this House with obstruction. What is much more important than that, it impugns your conduct, Sir, as the highest authority controlling the Debates in this House. The paragraphs to which I call attention are the following :—

“No sane man can honestly maintain that the whole Debate yesterday after the first four speeches was not sheer and obstructive waste of time. If so, why was the closure not permitted ? And (2) that obstruction is certainly not likely to decrease so long as Members on our side who move the closure are severely snubbed by the Speaker, as has more than once happened.

Now, this sort of thing must be stopped. If Mr. Speaker won't protect the rights of the majority, the majority must protect itself ; and I therefore make this suggestion, which I hope our Radical wing will act upon, namely, that every night a certain number of our men shall be told off to be ready, after a certain time devoted to obstruction, to move the closure one after another, at intervals of, say, five or ten minutes.

Mr. Speaker would probably refuse a good many ; but I doubt if he would continue the policy of snubbing us ; and, in either case, the country would know what to think.”

Unfortunately the hon. Member who wrote this letter (Mr. Conybeare) is not, as I should have thought it his duty, here to-day, and I have not had the opportunity of communicating with him. I do not know, Sir, what your directions may be on this point—whether a Motion of Breach of Privilege ought to be made



to-day or to-morrow, but I take it that the preliminary step will be to move, as I now do, that the letter be read at the Table.

MR. LABOUCHERE: I merely wished to interrupt the hon. Gentleman to say that I was requested to state—

\*MR. SPEAKER: Order, order! The Motion is that the letter be read at the Table, and that must be done before the hon. Member can be heard.

The Clerk then read the letter as follows:—

#### HOW TO CHECK OBSTRUCTION.

To the Editor of *The Westminster Gazette*.

Sir,—Every sensible man will be pleased to read in your issue to-day Mr. Hugh Hoare's manly protest against the obstruction of the Tories, and the dilettante indifference with which the highest authorities in the House appear to regard it.

It would, of course, be treason to criticise Mr. Speaker's way of dealing with it. But I will venture to affirm two propositions. (1) That no sane man can honestly maintain that the whole Debate yesterday after the first four speeches was not sheer and obstructive waste of time. If so, why was the Closure not permitted? And (2) that obstruction is certainly not likely to decrease so long as Members on our side who move the Closure are severely snubbed by the Speaker, as has more than once happened.

Now, this sort of thing must be stopped. If Mr. Speaker won't protect the rights of the majority, the majority must protect itself; and I therefore make this suggestion, which I hope our Radical wing will act upon, namely, that every night a certain number of our men shall be told off to be ready, after a certain time devoted to obstruction, to move the Closure one after another, at intervals of, say, five or ten minutes.

Mr. Speaker would probably refuse a good many; but I doubt if he would continue the policy of snubbing us; and, in either case, the country would know what to think.—Yours obediently,

C. A. V. CONYBEARE.

House of Commons, March 11.

\*MR. SPEAKER: Perhaps, for the purpose of expediting public business, the House would allow me to say a few words on the subject of the letter just read. I suppose it must happen in the discharge of my duties that I give offence to some honourable Members in this House, but I certainly do not wish to give offence intentionally, nor am I aware that I have ever (to use the not very polite expression in the letter) "snubbed" any honourable Member. I may be allowed to say that it is not, in my opinion, in accordance with good Parliamentary traditions that if any honourable Member takes offence at my conduct in the Chair he

should write to the newspapers. I am responsible to this House alone. I need not say that any threat from outside, or from any Member of this House, will have very little effect on my conduct. I had not seen this letter until a few minutes ago it was given me in the Chair. Another letter was given me the other day, written also by an honourable Member of this House, and I was asked whether it ought to be brought before the House. On the whole, I thought that letter was not worthy of notice. I put it down (I say it without offence) as an act of youthful indiscretion, inasmuch as the honourable Member had only been a Member for a few months, and that he was not aware of the forms and traditions of the House, but he was not in his right in dictating to me what course I should adopt in cases of Closure, who, I may remind the House, have been more than nine years in the Chair. The Closure is in my absolute discretion, subject to the terms of the Standing Order. As to honourable Members getting up repeatedly one after another, I think it would not be decorous, because the situation could not be so entirely altered in the short intervals referred to as to be likely to induce the Chair to change its mind. I believe that what occurred the other night was this: An honourable Member moved the Closure, and I indicated by a shake of the head that it was not exactly the right time to do it. The honourable Member who was speaking at the time was coming to a close, and as soon as he had concluded I assented to the Closure. Under those circumstances, and after this explanation, I trust the House may think that it is not worth while to enter on a discussion of this letter. I am certainly not excusing the letter, nor taking any particular exception to it on my own account. I am entirely in the hands of the House; but I venture most humbly to suggest that the House should pass it over on this occasion. Of course there is a charge against Members of the House as well as against me personally. I think the House can afford to pass over that too, and I am sure, after what has passed, honourable Members will feel it more consonant to their own dignity and the traditions of this House to bring any matter of complaint before the House, where it can be argued.

MR. HANBURY thereupon intimated that, after Mr. Speaker's observations, he should not proceed with the Motion he had intended to submit to the House.

## ORDERS OF THE DAY.

### SUPPLY—CIVIL SERVICE SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES, 1892-3.

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

#### CLASS VII.

Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That a Supplementary sum, not exceeding £11,000, be granted to Her Majesty, to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March 1893, for the Salaries and other Expenses of Temporary Commissions and Committees, including Special Inquiries."

\*MR. JAMES LOWTHER (Kent, Thanet): I am sorry to stand in the way of the important discussion to which the House has been so long anxiously looking forward—namely, the discussion of the Evicted Tenants Commission. If the forms of the Committee permitted, I should like to postpone the Amendment which I have given notice of so as to enable the Evicted Tenants Commission to be dealt with at once, but as I find there is some difficulty in the way of that course of proceeding, it will be for the convenience of the Committee that the matter of which I have given notice should be disposed of as far as circumstances permit in a very few words. If I were in order in bringing the subject on, on the Vote as a whole, I would adopt that course, but as I understand the invariable practice of the House it would be out of order for me to do so. If the right hon. Gentleman the President of the Board of Trade gives me the information I desire it will enable us at once to proceed with the main business of the evening. I will be brief in my remarks, so as to allow the Committee to proceed with the main business of the evening. The point to which I desire to draw attention is to that of the Labour Commission. I may say, in passing, that that body was appointed with thorough impartiality; it consisted of able representatives of all sections and opinion, thereby affording a favourable contrast to some of the other Commissions with which this Vote deals. The Secretary of the

Labour Commission was sent to the United States for the purpose of inquiring into the laws and customs and regulations prevailing in the United States with regard to the admission of alien immigrants. The inquiries of that Sub-Commissioner appear in a Blue Book which has been presented to the House by the Labour Commission—Volume I. of the Foreign Reports under the head of "United States." This Report, which I hold in my hand, appears to contain very full and complete information with regard to the customs and laws prevailing in the United States in relation to the admission of alien immigrants. The President of the Board of Trade said the other day, following up a statement made by the Prime Minister during the Debate on the Address, that he had appointed two Commissioners to proceed to the United States for the purpose of making inquiries with regard to the laws in force there against alien immigration. But if the right hon. Gentleman turns to page 38 of the Report in this Blue Book he will actually find all the information which he desires on the subject, information which goes to the very root of the question. It states the various Acts which are in force in regard to immigration in the States. Yet with this information in his possession the right hon. Gentleman thought it necessary to send other Commissioners to the United States. The right hon. Gentleman said that the Sub-Commissioners sent out by the Labour Commission had only touched the fringe of the subject. That is a very grave charge. My curiosity is evidently not so great as that of the right hon. Gentleman, for I think there is ample information to enable us to deal with this serious evil to which I drew the attention of the House on the Address. Will the right hon. Gentleman explain how we are asked to vote considerable sums for the Labour Commission, amongst other things the expenditure incurred by the expedition to the United States of their own Secretary? If this gentleman's services are worthless why should we have to pay for them? If he only touched the fringe of the subject, as the right hon. Gentleman said, the House of Commons should not be asked to pay one shilling for his services. I, however, am not disposed to think that this Sub-Commissioner did otherwise than a very

useful service. He draws attention in his Report to the laws and regulations in respect to alien immigration in force in the United States, and what else does the right hon. Gentleman want when he says it only touches the fringe of the subject? The right hon. Gentleman has made questionable selections—one of them, Herr Schloss, another Mr. Burnett, a gentleman connected with the Labour Department, had been sent up to review the work of the Sub-Commissioner sent out by the Labour Commission. I gave the right hon. Gentleman the opportunity of defending these appointments on another occasion, and he made personal references in which I will not follow him. I made no reference to the nationality of any person other than the persons to whom my question was directed. I must point out that a person cannot be competent to discharge impartial duties allotted to him if he holds preconceived opinions on the very subject on which he is called upon to hold an impartial inquiry. The right hon. Gentleman wanted to make my remarks on this occasion personal to himself. For years he has been occupied in public duties with honour to himself and advantage to the country, and the last reference I would make would be one calculated to give any personal offence to the right hon. Gentleman. If I were myself appointed to discharge these functions, I would have thought my appointment—unless counter-balanced by some one on the other side—a singularly bad appointment. Those who have committed themselves to strong opinions on any subject have a perfect right to hold these opinions, and to give expression to them, but they are not the right persons to be called upon to discharge *quasi*-judicial functions in respect of these subjects. I am told that the preconceived opinions of Herr Schloss on the subject he is called upon to investigate are notorious. I want, therefore, to ask the right hon. Gentleman why, with the Report of Mr. Drage before him, he thought it necessary to send out to the United States a gentleman whose impartiality on this question was certainly not above suspicion; also whether it is not the case that the right hon. Gentleman has been influenced in this selection by permanent officers whose bias on the subject is a matter of universal notoriety; and whether I can give the right hon.

*Mr. James Lowther*

Gentleman himself credit for freedom from bias on this question, a charge to which I plead guilty myself on my own side?

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE (Mr. MUNDELLA, Sheffield, Brightside): The right hon. Gentleman has raised a question upon the Royal Commission of Labour appointed by the late Government, and takes exception to an appointment I have made of gentlemen who are acting as Commissioners of the Labour Department. I do not see how that is in Order.

MR. JAMES LOWTHER: I must correct the right hon. Gentleman. My remarks were addressed to the Report of the Labour Commission which he now holds in his hands, and of which he said that it only touched the fringe of the subject.

\*MR. MUNDELLA: I said, certainly—this being a question of alien immigration—that the Report only touched the fringe of the subject; but I said nothing whatever in derogation of the great and distinguished ability of Mr. Drage, the Secretary of the Labour Commission, who prepared this Report. He has done his work well. The wonder is that in the short time at his disposal in the United States he was able to make such a Report as that, though it is gathered, not from personal observation, but from American Blue Books. I am the last person in the world to detract from the services of the able Secretary to the Labour Commission. The services he has rendered are admirable, and the whole work is well done. But I must take exception to the way in which the right hon. Gentleman has attempted to cast ridicule upon Mr. Schloss, who is English by birth and a distinguished Oxford man, and who has dealt with the labour question in a way in which scarcely a dozen other men could deal with it. The right hon. Gentleman speaks of him as of alien extraction and as a foreigner, and cannot even pronounce his name properly, for he called him “Hurr Schloss.” It is only done for the purpose of casting ridicule on a distinguished man. Mr. Schloss and Mr. John Burnett have been appointed to make a thorough, exhaustive, and impartial investigation of this question of alien immigration in the States, and to lay the result of their investigations before

the House betwixt this and the 1st July. Why does the right hon. Gentleman take exception to this? He complains that I am not content with the scattered references to the question at page 13 of this Blue Book. If the right hon. Gentleman knew anything at all about the subject, he would know that Mr. Drage's Report only touches the fringe of the subject, for it is not based upon personal observation, but is simply the result of what he was able to gather up from American Reports and Blue Books on the whole question of American labour. Mr. Drage himself would be the first to admit that. It seems to me that the right hon. Gentleman is rather afraid of the investigation and that he is not anxious to have an exhaustive statement on the whole matter. We have been actuated by the desire to furnish the House with full information, and I am sure the Reports of the gentlemen who are now in the United States will justify the action which we have taken. The action we have taken was not on the advice of partial and prejudiced persons, as the right hon. Gentleman said, but on the advice of those who are anxious that full and exhaustive information should be obtained. But there is no proposal before the House. The right hon. Gentleman has not moved a reduction in the Vote, for had he done so he would have censured the late Government who set up the Commission. No one knows better than I do the good work done by Mr. Drage. As Chairman of a section of the Labour Commission, I was constantly brought in contact with Mr. Drage for two years, and I could not say anything of that gentleman except in terms of the highest praise.

SIR JOHN GORST (Cambridge University): I am glad that the right hon. Gentleman has withdrawn the censure which he passed upon Mr. Drage last week.

MR. MUNDELLA: I rise to Order. I am in the recollection of the House. I made no reflection of the kind. I said nothing in derogation of Mr. Drage. In fact, I said nothing about him except in his praise.

SIR J. GORST: I think the interruption of the right hon. Gentleman most disorderly. I say I am glad he has withdrawn his imputation,

MR. MUNDELLA: I never made any.

SIR J. GORST: Whether intentionally or not, the words used by the right hon. Gentleman the other day did convey an imputation both upon Mr. Drage and the Labour Commission. This sort of sneer came extremely badly from the right hon. Gentleman, who was a Member of the Commission, and had as much to do as anybody with the direction of its efforts. What the right hon. Gentleman stated the other day was that the inquiries made in America on the Labour Question, and on alien immigration in particular, only touched the fringe of the question.

MR. MUNDELLA: I did not say so.

SIR J. GORST: That description of the labours of Mr. Drage is most unjust and unfair. Mr. Drage went to America last year—his expenses are charged in this Vote—and made a most complete and exhaustive inquiry into the whole subject, and in the archives of the Labour Commission, as the right hon. Gentleman well knows, there is now to be found the fullest information on every branch of the question. As I understand this is a mere conversation, and no long speeches are to be made on the subject, I will not enumerate to the House particulars of this information. I will content myself by saying that anyone who inquires at the offices of the Labour Commission will find complete information of the Statutes passed by the United States of America and by individual States upon the subject of alien immigration. He will also find there a Report by a Committee appointed by the United States on the subject of foreign contract labour, which gives a most complete account of the mode in which the Act regulating these contracts operate, the way in which they are attempted to be carried into execution, the difficulties met with in the United States in the practical administration of the law, and various proposals and suggestions which have been made by public men in America and by persons very well qualified to give expression to opinions for the amendment of that legislation. So far from the information collected by Mr. Drage being a mere collection of Reports and Statutes, he made a personal investigation into the matter and brought back a complete record of the opinions of all persons best

qualified in America to give an opinion as to the best mode in which alien immigration could be dealt with and as to the various difficulties the United States suffer from in the way of deterring immigration from Europe and China. The right hon. Gentleman said that Mr. Drage would be the first to admit that his inquiries only touched the fringe of the subject. I would retort upon the right hon. Gentleman by saying that nobody can be more certain that no further information is necessary than the two gentlemen who have been sent out on a fool's errand to examine and inquire into a matter which has already been amply and sufficiently inquired into.

MR. MUNDELLA: In reference to that, I wish to say that the two gentlemen who have been sent out would certainly not have gone if they thought they were being sent on a fool's errand. No two gentlemen are more impressed with the importance of further examination and the necessity of bringing the whole facts before the Government.

COLONEL HOWARD VINCENT (Sheffield, Central): I wish to ask the right hon. Gentleman whether the instructions given to Mr. Burnett and Mr. Schloss in relation to their mission to America will be laid on the Table?

MR. MUNDELLA: If the hon. Gentleman will ask at the Vote Office he will get them.

COLONEL HOWARD VINCENT: They have not got them there.

MR. MUNDELLA: I handed them to the Clerk at the Table more than a week ago with instructions that they were to be printed.

The subject then dropped.

#### THE EVICTED TENANTS COMMISSION.

\*MR. T. W. RUSSELL (Tyrone, S.), in rising to move the rejection of the Vote by £2,175, the cost of the Evicted Tenants Commission, said that whatever might be the opinion of hon. Members as to the proceedings in Committee of Supply during the last few days—and he was quite aware that there were two opinions on that subject—surely, at all events, every one in the House would admit that they had now reached a question involving a grave matter of policy, and a question upon which it was perfectly legitimate, nay, absolutely necessary,

that the time of the Committee should be fairly and freely given. He hoped that in discussing this question at length the Chief Secretary for Ireland would avoid imputing any motives. He would tell the right hon. Gentleman his reasons for saying that. In the first place, he was responsible in that House, as the right hon. Gentleman was aware, for the 13th Section of the Land Purchase Act. The right hon. Gentleman also knew that he was responsible for moving the rejection of Mr. O'Kelly's Evicted Tenants Bill, and the right hon. Gentleman knew—if he knew anything—that he had taken more than an ordinary interest in the unhappy proceedings in Ireland which had brought about this Commission. Therefore, whether the Chief Secretary for Ireland chose to attach motives to his conduct or not, this was a question upon which he had always taken the deepest interest, and it was not out of place that he should move the rejection of the Vote. He did not intend to take refuge in moving a nominal reduction of the Vote. He had given notice to leave out the whole sum, for he intended to impeach the whole policy of the Commission. He looked upon the recommendations of the Commission as suggestions for making the way of transgressors not hard but easy, and he thought that if a Bill were founded upon these recommendations it would be a Bill for the revision of the Decalogue. He also proposed to impeach the expenditure of the money as sheer waste, and he was prepared to prove that there was not a fact in the whole Report and its Appendices that was not in the possession of the Government before the Commission sat. What was new in it was not true, and what was old was in the possession of the Government before Sir James Mathew went to Dublin. He held that the Police and the other Government Departments could have supplied the Chief Secretary with the whole of the information in this Report. In the next place, he proposed to charge the Chief Secretary with packing this Commission; that instead of appointing an impartial Commission, as the right hon. Gentleman proposed, he appointed a thoroughly one-sided Commission, and he intended to aver that the conduct of the President rendered the

*Sir J. Gorst*

findings of that Commission absolutely worthless so far as Parliament was concerned. He would refer briefly to the history of this question. The period to which the Commission was confined was 1879; it was not entitled to go beyond that year in its inquiry. There were, of course, evictions before 1879, but into those evictions the Commission was not to inquire. He wanted the Committee to recognise that the period from 1879 to 1892 covered two very important epochs in Ireland. It covered the epoch of the Land League and that of the Plan of Campaign, and he thought he should not be far wrong in declaring that this Commission sat mainly for the purpose of inquiring into evictions arising out of those two illegal conspiracies. As far as the Land League was concerned—and it had had almost everything to do with the earlier evictions—there could be no doubt as to the character of that organization. It had been described by the Prime Minister himself. It had been declared by the Prime Minister that crime dogged its footsteps, and the right hon. Gentleman suppressed the Land League as an illegal Association. Sir James Mathew talked of the Plan of Campaign as “an unfortunate agrarian controversy.” Fortunately for those concerned, a man of much more importance, in Ireland at all events—Chief Baron Palles—had described it very differently. Chief Baron Palles, in charging a jury in the famous case of “*Blunt v. Byrne*,” said it was his duty to declare that the Plan of Campaign “was essentially an illegal Association, and that any meeting for the purpose of promoting it was in law an illegal Assembly, that the Crown or any magistrate had power to disperse any meeting called for that purpose, and when a magistrate had notice of such a meeting it was his duty to do all that in him lay to prevent or, if necessary, disperse it.” The Evicted Tenants Commission practically covered the evictions arising out of the Land League and the Plan of Campaign. It might be called a Commission for the purpose of finding out some way of relieving Messrs. John Dillon and William O’Brien from their responsibility to the victims of the Plan of Campaign. There could be no pretence for saying that the evictions carried out under the auspices of those two illegal organizations were

due to any inability on the part of the tenants to pay their rent. He admitted that there might have been cases of evicted persons who were unable to pay their rent; but, so far as the great majority of the Land League and Plan of Campaign cases were concerned, he maintained that they were not evictions due to inability to pay rent. They were evictions deliberately brought about for the purpose of making government in Ireland impossible, and for the additional purpose of trying to humbug English electors, in order to place right hon. Gentlemen on the Treasury Bench. These tenants were not in the main the victims of bad landlords; they were the pawns of hon. Members opposite, who moved them about on the political chess-board as suited them, and with a cruelty almost unparalleled in this country. As things proceeded these thousands of men became rather a serious burden on the Nationalist exchequer. That exchequer was very full at one time, but the Party having been overtaken by what was called “domestic afflictions,” these troubles seriously interfered with the flow of dollars from the United States. He had never made the mistake of believing, like an hon. Friend of his, that the Gladstonians had given hon. Members opposite money. The Gladstonian Party were always ready with sympathy. That Party always discreetly drew the line at hard cash. The first step taken in this matter, upon this state of affairs being brought about, was during the passage of the Land Purchase Act of 1891. He noticed that the action of Parliament in that year figured as the real cause for the appointment of the Commission. The Chief Secretary had stated this in a letter to the hon. Member for North Longford. The right hon. Gentleman sheltered himself behind the 13th section of that Act; and when Sir James Mathew opened the Commission, he avowedly stated that they sat practically because that section had been passed. He invited the Committee to examine carefully the wording of that clause. From beginning to end there was not a word about the reinstatement of these men as tenants. On the contrary, the clause was expressly drawn to bar any such idea; and, so far as he knew the policy of those in favour of that section, they recognised

that it would be the height of injustice to force back on a landlord a tenant who had defrauded him, and with whom the landlord could not have good relations in future. It had never occurred to the Committee in passing that clause to put back the evicted men as tenants. What happened was this. A great measure was passing through the House under very exceptional circumstances. It had had great good luck by the absence of hon. Members upstairs during the early part of the Session, and what happened was this, that when the Bill was passing through the House in Committee appeals were made that something should be done for the evicted tenants, and what Parliament did by that clause was simply this. Parliament did not propose to send these men back as tenants. It said that where the landlord was willing and where the tenant was anxious they should have the power under the Act, without the formal reinstatement of the men as tenants, for the one to sell and the other to buy. There was no pressure on the evicted tenant or on the landlord. Parliament assumed that both were willing and anxious to come together, and it provided, if hon. Members chose to call it so, an extraordinary means by which, in the circumstances, the landlord and the tenant could come together, and the farms could be sold to those men who had been tenants. Nothing could be plainer than that proposal. He submitted, therefore, that it was entirely contrary not only to the recommendation of the Evicted Tenants Commission, but to the policy of Ministers before the Commission was formed. He now came to the second step in this matter. The six months under which these ex-tenants had to make their applications expired. Very few applications were made. He did not say that there was any special cause for that circumstance. He had heard the cause mentioned, but he was not able to satisfy himself that the charges made against the hon. Member for East Mayo were correct. Very few applications were made, and when it was found that the section was not likely to accomplish its purpose, a Bill was introduced by Mr. O'Kelly. He asked the attention of the House to the character of that Bill. He moved its rejection, and, in doing so, he spoke of it as the most audacious Bill ever

*Mr. T. W. Russell*

introduced into Parliament. What the Bill proposed was that every tenant evicted since 1879 should have a right to go to his old landlord and demand possession of the farm. If any one was in legal possession of that farm the former tenant was to be armed with authority to put him out, then the landlord should be forced to sell that land to the old tenant not on the landlord's terms, but on the terms to be fixed by the Land Commission. Yet, he supposed, in obedience to the agreements and understandings with hon. Members opposite, the Leaders of the Opposition at that time, now on the Treasury Bench, trotted gaily out into the Lobby in support of the Second Reading of that Bill. That was a tolerably stiff proceeding, and he could imagine that several right hon. Gentlemen felt a little squeamish at what they were doing. After the performance of the First Commissioner of Works in Ireland, however, he really did not see how they could do anything else. The Bill was rejected. The House must recollect that thousands of starving tenants were now out of their holdings, living in Land League huts, some suffering from disease, some from hunger. ["Oh, oh!" and Mr. W. O'BRIEN: "Rubbish!"] Although Irishmen could live on very little, they could hardly live on what the hon. Member opposite doled out to them in the latter days. They now came to the third step in this remarkable proceeding. They came to the letter of the Chief Secretary after he had got into the saddle in Dublin Castle. Something was necessary; the right hon. Gentleman could not escape doing something, because he remembered one of the Leaders of the Party opposite saying to him in the Lobby after the defeat of Mr. O'Kelly's Bill: "Well, you have beaten us; but we have bagged the Front Bench." [*Cries of "Name!"*] Having bagged the Front Bench, they now came to the proceedings of the Front Bench after they crossed the floor of the House. [*Interruption.*]

Mr. W. THORBURN (Peebles and Selkirk): I rise to Order, Sir. I ask you if it is in Order for one hon. Member to say to another hon. Member that he does not believe him?

Mr. T. W. RUSSELL: Stand up in your place and say it.

MR. C. H. HOPWOOD (Lancashire, S.E., Middleton); I said I did not believe it—the incident.

\*MR. T. W. RUSSELL said he was very much obliged to the hon. Member [*Cries from the Nationalist Benches of "Withdraw!"*] He would not withdraw. He repeated, that that was said to him by a Member of the Party opposite. [*Cries of "Name!"*] It was not a private conversation at all; it was in the Lobby. [*"Name!"*] He repeated, that that was said to him. Having been bagged, he came now to their payment for the services rendered, and the first incident of the payment was this: the right hon. Gentleman wrote a letter to the Member for North Longford, announcing, not that he was going to restore the evicted tenants, but that he proposed to issue what he called "a small and impartial Commission to inquire into the whole subject." The letter was, in one sense, one of the most shameless State Papers that was ever issued. He would shortly tell the House what he meant by that. The right hon. Gentleman said, writing to the hon. Member for North Longford—

"You will remember that, in the discussion which took place in the House of Commons in the summer of last year upon this subject, Mr. Balfour, Mr. Smith-Barry, and others fully admitted that a great evil existed, to which it was most desirable, in the interests of peace and good government, that an effective remedy should be applied. An effort was made by Parliament to carry out this declared object of public policy, by passing the 13th section of the Land Act of 1891. That provision has, unfortunately, proved not only inadequate, but an entire failure. Out of the very large number of cases in which the action was intended to bring relief, only 187 settlements have been effected, and of these 103 were on one single estate. The evil is wholly untouched. One figure supplies a significant test of its magnitude. It is estimated that the extra force of police required in connection with the evicted tenants and the consequent disquiet is not less than 600 men, at a cost of some £45,000 per annum."

That was what he called shameless, and he asserted that if it cost £450,000 per annum instead of £45,000 the right hon. Gentleman was entitled to protect men under the law, and he had no right to whine at the cost of that protection. What did he say?—

"We propose, therefore, by the Lord Lieutenant's warrant, to appoint a small Commission to examine and report, with strict impartiality, and as promptly as may be, the actual circumstances and practical equity of the case."

They would see how that was carried out, because they now came to the fourth step, the appointment of the Commission. That Commission was to be appointed "with strict impartiality." Did hon. Members remember in recent years a single Land Commission in Ireland that had not a representative at least of both sides? Let them take the Bessborough and also the Cowper Commissions, where the landlords and tenants were both represented. Coming to the composition of this "impartial" Commission, the first name he would take was that of Mr. Reddington. He had been held up as a landlord, but he was one of those landlords who, when the storm began to blow, sold his land under Lord Salisbury's Purchase Acts, and, to use the elegant metaphor of the hon. Member for North Louth, "walked off with the swag." Mr. Reddington was known to be hostile to the landlords, had ceased to be one of them, and had no right or title to represent the landlords of Ireland on the Commission. Then there was Mr. John Roche. He had not a word to say against Mr. Roche as a lawyer. He occupied a good position in his profession; but when they were talking of an impartial Commission they must bear in mind that Mr. Roche was at one time, and very recently, a director of *The Freeman's Journal*, which was fiercely hostile to the landlords, and he was a Nationalist in politics. Then there was Mr. Murrough O'Brien. Would anybody who knew anything about Ireland say that Mr. Murrough O'Brien was a landlords' representative? Everyone knew he was strongly on the tenants' side. Mr. Murphy was the fourth. He was one of the officials in the Land Judges' Court, a land valuer, and was said to be a Conservative. Next, they came to Sir James Mathew, the President. What he had to say about Sir James Mathew, he hoped, would hurt nobody's feelings in that House, however friendly they might be to that gentleman. He (Mr. Russell) held, the moment that the Commission was formed, that the presence of Sir James Mathew as an English Judge would give a judicial air to the whole proceedings of the Commission. Even packed as it had been, with an English Judge at its head, it would probably have commanded respect but for the proceedings of the Commission itself. The



landlords and the public expected this judicial character to be given to it by this English Judge, and the landlords who were concerned in it were prepared to go before the Commission to state their case. The Commission, therefore, when it opened in November, opened with a fair prospect of arriving at the truth in this matter. Sir James Mathew, to put it mildly, disappointed everyone. His opening speech, which he (Mr. Russell) heard; his conduct to counsel, and even his threats to the newspapers—because he went the length of telling the reporters that if their newspapers criticised the evidence they would find themselves in the position of evicted tenants—shattered every iota of hope which ever existed in any man's mind that there would be a fair hearing of all sides in this matter. In his opening speech Sir James Mathew said—

"The course we propose to take is this: we must first, we very much regret, take the case of tenants evicted and threatened with eviction on the Clanricarde Estate. Urgent representations have been made to us that Parliament should be fully informed as to the mode in which Lord Clanricarde has used the powers which the law has entrusted to him as a landlord. For the present, so far as we know, Lord Clanricarde stands alone; no other landlord makes common cause with him. Even at the eleventh hour he may see the wisdom of permitting us to extricate him from his position. Great as is his risk, no man need envy him."

\*THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Sir C. RUSSELL, Hackney, S.): Great as is his rank.

MR. T. W. RUSSELL said it was printed in the paper from which he was quoting, "Great as is his risk."

MR. BODKIN: What paper?

MR. T. W. RUSSELL: *The Evening Mail* of the same date. He would make the correction willingly—

"Great as is his rank, no man need envy him. The fullest opportunity will be given him to show why, as regards his evicted tenants, he has declined to follow the example generally set by the landlords of his own county. If he refuses to attend—"

And then the hon. and learned Member for the University of Dublin (Mr. Carson) rose in his place and said—

"I appear for him, and I do not know why these observations should be made.

The President: You shall hear presently.

Mr. Carson: I am only stating that I appear here for him, and I do not know why—

*Mr. T. W. Russell*

The President: I am very glad to see you. If Lord Clanricarde in person refuses to attend and explain his conduct he must be prepared for the assumption that arises, and the inference that is properly drawn where evidence is deliberately withheld."

Was ever the like of that heard of in any Court pretending to have any judicial character at all? What right had this gentleman, whose duty it was to sit and hear evidence, to comment on any man before he had received his evidence? He was practically trying a man before he had heard him. What right had Sir James Mathew to make any observation upon Lord Clanricarde, or any other man, until he had heard the case against him? He was told, and very properly told, that Lord Clanricarde, so far from being absent, appeared by counsel. Sir James Mathew had no right to assume that Lord Clanricarde would not appear in person. He had done the proper thing, having sent counsel to represent him, and Sir James Mathew had no earthly right to assume that Lord Clanricarde wanted to shirk inquiry, and, in a judicial proceeding, to hold that man up to obloquy—no matter what his character might be—and he had no wish to defend Lord Clanricarde. [*Ironical Irish Cheers.*]

Yes, but even the eminent lawyer who was Recorder for Liverpool (Mr. Hopwood) would admit that even a street walker had a right to be heard before trial. He did not see why that hon. Gentleman (Mr. Hopwood) should press for hard sentences seeing that he himself was prepared to let off all the scoundrels he possibly could. [*Cries of "Order!" and "Withdraw!"*]

MR. T. M. HEALY: I wish to know from you, Sir, whether it is in Order to—

\*THE CHAIRMAN (interrupting): I think the hon. Member will see that this observation ought not to have been made.

\*MR. T. W. RUSSELL: I shall do what the hon. Member did not do; I shall withdraw it.

\*MR. H. H. FOWLER: I rise to Order. The hon. Member has said of another hon. and learned Member that in the exercise of his judicial functions he is letting off all the scoundrels he possibly can. I say that the mere withdrawal of

such an accusation is inadequate to the offence. We are entitled to ask that he should apologise.

**MR. A. J. BALFOUR** : On the point of Order, Mr. Mellor, before you give your ruling, may I ask you whether it is not the fact that this same Member, this judicial Member, described the Member for Tyrone—*[Cries of Order!]*—accused the Member for Tyrone of misstatement, and whether, if there are to be withdrawals, they should not be made all round?

**\*THE CHAIRMAN** : I called upon the hon. Member to withdraw an expression which was plainly un-Parliamentary, and which he ought not to have used. The hon. Member at once, as I understood, withdrew that expression. With regard to the hon. and learned Member who was referred to, the hon. and learned Member rose in his place and told us that he did not say that he did not believe the hon. Member, but that he did not believe the inference he had drawn from the statement.

**\*MR. T. W. RUSSELL** said he heartily withdrew the expression he had used. He admitted he had been nettled by the hon. and learned Gentleman, and he expressed his regret that in the heat of the moment he was tempted into saying what he ought not to have said, and he withdrew it most heartily.

**MR. HOPWOOD** : If by any word of mine I offended the hon. Gentleman, I am sure I withdraw it.

**\*MR. T. W. RUSSELL** said he had just quoted the opening speech of Sir James Mathew, and commented severely upon it. What was the first effect of that speech? The first effect of it was to compel the retirement of Mr. Murphy, who was the only member of the Commission who by any process could be construed into being a representative of the landlords. Mr. Murphy, a day or two days after the delivery of that speech, resigned his seat on that Commission, and he plainly told Sir James Mathew that he could not be responsible for the acts of a Commission opened as that one had been. What the Committee had to face was this : by any process of reasoning there was only one man on that Commission who could be said to have had the slightest sympathy with landlords, and that man was driven from the Com-

mission by his sense of duty after hearing Sir James Mathew's opening speech. Now, another curious thing took place. Mr. Murrough O'Brien also retired, not because he was the least squeamish about what had been said, but because he had been appointed one of the Chief Land Commissioners by the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Morley). He wanted to know why either of these two gentlemen was ever appointed. He would take Mr. Murphy first. Mr. Murphy was the Chief Receiver in the Land Judges' Court, and in that capacity he had to sanction evictions. *[An hon. MEMBER : No.]* There was not an eviction in the Land Judges' Court that had not to be initialled by Mr. Murphy. Mr. Murphy was supposed to inquire into every eviction since 1879, some of them having been authorised by himself, and he was to sit in judgment on his own action. *[Mr. T. M. HEALY : No.]* Take Mr. Murrough O'Brien. He only sat on the Commission about 48 hours, but he (Mr. Russell) heard him cross-examine one witness, his cross-examination apparently being directed to prove that these tenants could not pay anything for the land, that they were ruined and bankrupt men, and that it was, therefore, needless to talk about their purchasing property under the Land Purchase Act. Would it be believed that this gentleman, who was proving out of the witness's mouth that these tenants could not pay for the land, would have been the one man, probably, under an Evicted Tenants Bill for reinstating them, who would have had to value the land for the purpose of the sale? Mr. O'Brien was at that time not a Chief Land Commissioner, but a Land Valuer under the Land Purchase Act. What made the right hon. Gentleman put two officials in any such position? He maintained they had no right to be there. But the real point was this : that Sir James Mathew's unwarrantable speech on the opening day compelled the retirement of Mr. Murphy from the Commission, and there thus retired the only man who could by any possibility be held to represent the landlords' case. What followed? They saw how this strictly impartial Commission proceeded. Of course the landlords affected, after Mr. Murphy's retirement, had to take counsel with each other as to what they

were to do, and they resolved that they would also retire and take no part whatever in the proceedings, and they acted with good sound common sense in doing so. In opening the proceedings Sir James Mathew announced that it was proposed to examine witnesses who might attend to give evidence on each side, and "that those interested would be permitted to put, through members of the Commission, any questions that might appear to be relevant." Just imagine a landlord—the only representative of the landlords having retired—sending up a question to any member of that Commission, say to the President, who had examined the hon. Member for East Galway from the Parnell Commission Report; who had examined that hon. Member from his direct examination, and with his cross-examination lying open before him, had failed to test him on a single case. Imagine a landlord sending up a question to Sir James Mathew, Mr. Reddington, or Mr. Roche after that! The landlords, in his opinion, not only acted within their right, but acted properly and with a due sense of their own self-respect, when they left this small and impartial Commission to its own devices. At the outset he said that the Commission got no evidence but what the Chief Secretary was in possession of before, and those who looked at the proposals would find this was absolutely correct. And what did the proposals amount to? The proposals were simply Mr. O'Kelly's Bill writ large. Why, it was actually proposed to give these dishonest men a privilege which that House had up to the present resolutely refused to honest men in Ireland. There were a good many tenants in Ireland who had paid their rents who were watching these proceedings with some interest. If they were going to make the way of transgressors easy, if they were going to amend the Decalogue, and say, "Thou shalt not steal unless it be from a landlord," did they think the men who were paying their rents regularly in Ireland were going to continue that delightful process? Through all the trials and difficulties in Ireland these men had struggled to be honest men, had paid their rents, and if the Government were now going to reward dishonest men they would be putting a premium on dishonesty, and they would have no right

to expect that these men who had paid their rents in the past would continue, in face of such treatment of the dishonest tenants, to pay them in the future. If they were going to do this by the Irish tenants, why not do it to shopkeepers and traders? Why not back up everybody who had fallen and stumbled by the way, or who had been dishonest enough to cheat his creditors? He declared this was a deliberate proposal to reward dishonest men. First of all the tenants were given compulsory reinstatement. There was nothing more insane, for it was evident that if tenants were forced back compulsorily there could not be anything like good relationship between them and the landlords, and the whole arrangement would break down. Not only was it proposed to give the tenants compulsory reinstatement, but it was also proposed to give them compulsory purchase. That was what had been denied to honest men.

MR. T. M. HEALY: You voted against it.

MR. WILLIAM O'BRIEN: You ate your words.

\*MR. T. W. RUSSELL said he voted against a mere electioneering Resolution designed to capture votes in Ulster, and which was never intended to be heard of afterwards. A large number of tenants had asked for this compulsory purchase, but up to the present it had always been refused to these men who were willing to pay a fair price and to be honest men; but now this strictly impartial Commission came forward, and in one of its recommendations proposed to give to these men who had swindled and cheated the landlords this right of compulsory purchase which the House had refused to honest men. A more preposterous proposal never was made. It gave them another thing which small farmers had asked for and been refused. It proposed, when this purchase took place, to give an extension of time for repayment. At present a man who bought under the Land Purchase Act had to pay in 49 years. That was the term for honest men; for dishonest men the time was to be extended, and the annual payments to be reduced in amount. What was that but putting a premium on dishonesty? Did they think these cute farmers in Ireland were going to allow this? The right

hon. Gentleman was utterly mistaken if he thought he could carry out any such proposal in Ireland without making it universal. But what was worse than that, the Commissioners recognised that if these men had the best terms from the State that the State could give them that they were bankrupts, and the proposal here was also humorous if it was not so serious. They proposed to authorise Boards of Guardians to raise a tax to stock farms. That was the doctrine of Collectivism with a vengeance. How would it work out, for instance, in that delightful place, County Clare? Take Lord Inchiquin's property. What it would mean on that property if Lord Inchiquin had any evicted tenants would be this: he paid the whole of the poor rate for holdings under £4; as a matter of fact he paid three-fourths of the poor rate in that division, and the recommendation of the Commission worked out in this way: that Lord Inchiquin would practically have to restock the farms for the tenants he had evicted. That was a very subtle proposition, he admired it, and it did credit to Sir James Mathew. It was one of those strictly impartial recommendations, and it would be a great pity if the country should not see the full force of it. He called this proposal at the beginning a proposal to relieve two hon. Members of the most serious responsibility that ever men undertook. Why did he say that? What did the Commission inquire into? Into the case of tenants evicted since 1879? Not a bit of it. They did nothing of the kind. That was what they were ordered to do. They did a very different thing. They knew what their duty was, and they did it. They inquired into the 17 estates for which the two hon. Gentlemen were responsible, and then they bulked the remainder of the evicted tenants—of whom they did not see one—and put them into one of the Appendices. Was he right or wrong, then, in saying this was a measure for the relief of these two hon. Gentlemen? Everyone of these estates, he thought, with one exception—Lord Cloncurry's estate, which was a Land League estate—were Plan of Campaign estates. 2,755 applications were received from other evicted tenants, which the Commission did not inquire into, and about which they did not

receive evidence. That was the way they carried out their orders. They inquired into estates that had been cursed by the action of these two hon. Gentlemen; they took no notice, but put into an Appendix the cases of 2,755 tenants evicted from 1879 throughout the country. There was a point in this he was rather thankful should be brought out. When they had asserted that these evicted farms had been largely taken, hon. Members had always scouted the idea, and had wanted to know where the tenants were. They had no need to ask that now, because they had got this information in the Appendix. They had it now that outside those estates 2,755 applications were received from evicted tenants. Into these there was no inquiry. They had it, too, that 1,298 evicted farms had been taken—re-taken—by tenants. Would hon. Members opposite (the Nationalists) deny that? They could not do so, for the Commission had embodied the fact in their Report. The remainder of the farms were not all derelict, for 960 were being farmed by the landowners, and only 452 were lying derelict. What did hon. Gentlemen think of this, and what confidence could they place in the statements of gentlemen opposite after these figures? He was sorry to say there were many who did not know the facts; but he declared that it was impossible for hon. Members from Ireland to go through the country in the future telling the public that all these farms were derelict. He (Mr. Russell) had stated his case as fairly as he could. He had never professed, and he did not profess now, to have any sympathy with men who allowed themselves to be evicted for the purpose of winning English elections, or because hon. Members wished to make government in Ireland impossible. He desired that these tenants, and those who forced them into that course, should suffer for their action. As he had pointed out, not one could challenge the case he had made. The Chief Secretary was pleased to shelter himself behind the 13th section of the Act of 1891. That section did not profess to re-instate the men as tenants. Just to show that the Commission, in the absence of evidence from the landlords, had made grievous mistakes, he would ask the attention of the Committee to the case of The O'Grady's estate. The Report said negotiations

under Section 13 failed on that estate on the question of costs. Had the Commission been able to examine The O'Grady they would have found that that was not the cause of the failure at all. What were the facts? Mr. George Fottrell told him (Mr. Russell) that the tenants had offered to purchase at 18 years, and that The O'Grady declined the offer. Well, he thought The O'Grady had made a mistake, and Mr. Fottrell said to him, "You know The O'Grady estate, and you know The O'Grady; would you mind writing to him, saying what you have just said to me?" He did write; and he received an answer that startled him. The O'Grady wrote back that the real difficulty with the tenants was that he (The O'Grady) would have to go security for the men, leaving one-fifth of the purchase money as such. These men, he said, had robbed and swindled him, and he was not prepared to go security for them, as in the event of certain circumstances arising—the slightest agricultural depression and consequent stoppage of payments—the State would seize the one-fifth. He (Mr. Russell) had nothing to say in reply to that. He could not ask that the landlord should go security for men who had treated him so badly in the past. If The O'Grady had been examined, and if this had been an impartial Commission, his evidence would have been secured—the Commission would not have had to put into the Report that which was not the true statement of reasons for the breakdown of negotiations. Then let them take the case of the Olphert estate. The Report stated that 146 tenants had gone back to their homes. There were nearly 350—about that—and he was prepared to state that they had all gone back, except 70 or 80; but the Commissioners deliberately shut out this evidence, and the Report contained that which was not true. The Report had nothing but one-sided testimony. What he had to say, in conclusion, was this: that the right hon. Gentleman was not warranted in taking up the attitude he did take up in relation to the 13th section. He knew that the House would offer no opposition to any reasonable settlement between these two parties; but it must be a reasonable settlement, and not an unreasonable one. It must not be a settlement in the nature of a reward for wrongdoing. It must

not be a settlement which would put these tenants in a better position than honest tenants. The House was willing to do anything that was reasonable; but he did not think that was what the Commission wanted done. The Report laid before them could serve no good purpose. It was stated that when the late Mr. Parnell first brought this question of the evicted tenants before the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary the latter threw up his hands in dismay. He did not know whether that was true or not as regarded the right hon. Gentleman, but he believed it was true that Mr. Parnell himself threw up his hands. But whether he did it or not, it was a sensible thing to have done. The right hon. Gentleman was now committed to a policy which, if he attempted to pursue it, would be fought inch by inch in that House. He need not think that he could levy blackmail on honest men in Ireland and give it over to men who were not honest. He need not think that honest tenants were going to be treated in this way by him. He (Mr. Russell) had stated in the beginning of his speech what his opinion was of the Bill they were promised. They had already a Bill for the Better Government of Ireland. Why should they not have a Bill for the better ordering of the moral universe? The Government majority of 40, born of priestcraft, might do some things; but there was one thing it could not do, and that was to give effect to the proposals contained in this Report. He begged to move that the Vote be reduced by £2,170, being the amount charged for the Evicted Tenants Commission.

Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That Item S, of £2,700, for Commissions not specially provided for, be reduced by £2,170."—*(Mr. T. W. Russell.)*

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. J. MORLEY, Newcastle-upon-Tyne): I am sorry to stand between the Committee and hon. Members who have risen; but as my action has been so strongly and directly challenged, perhaps it is as well that I should at once say the few words I have to say upon it. The hon. Gentleman began by begging people to impute to him no motives. I have no intention of imputing motives to him. All that he said as to the part he has taken in previous discussions in this

House upon this subject was perfectly true, and I am only surprised that he should have thought it worth while to remind us of his previous share in these discussions, when I contrast the tone and line he has taken to-night with the tone and line he took the last time this subject was before the House. Who could believe when we heard the hon. Gentleman declaim against rogues and swindlers, and all projects for giving dishonest men advantages over honest men, that he was the same hon. Member who used language which I shall presently quote less than two years ago? The beginning of this movement in Parliament for all effective purposes was made by the Leader of the Opposition; and I will beg the Committee to listen to these words, because they show that all the declamatory denunciation of the hon. Member with regard to these evicted tenants cannot be reconciled with the language that was used in all quarters of the House in May and June of 1891. The hon. Member was quite right in saying I started from Section 13—that in appointing this Commission, in drawing the Instructions to the Commission, and in the hopes that I anticipated from the work of the Commission I had in my mind what took place upon Section 13. The right hon. Gentleman opposite used this kind of language. He said in a passage which all of us who were in the House at that time will always remember—he first of all, in tones of passionate vehemence, declared that if he were an Irish landlord he would rather beg his bread than give in to the Plan of Campaign. The right hon. Gentleman, standing at this box, had no sooner said that than he added these words: He said that when the illegal conspiracy came to an end he should remember that these men were compelled by intimidation in many cases to follow courses which they regretted. That may be; but the right hon. Gentleman went on to say—

“And for my own part, if I were an Irish landlord, even if it were not wholly to my own personal and pecuniary interest, I should desire to restore peace to that part of the country in which my property was situated, and to see that on fair, equitable, and even generous terms the tenants were restored to their ancient homes.”

But these tenants, whom the right hon. Gentleman would desire to see restored to their ancient homes, are, according to

the hon. Gentleman who has just sat down, a gang of fraudulent debtors, a gang of swindlers, led on by men worse than themselves. But in spite of that the right hon. Gentleman opposite would have restored them to their homes on fair, equitable, and even generous terms. That is the very policy on which the issue of this Commission was founded. But the right hon. Gentleman was not the only hon. Member on this side of the House who used language of that kind. The hon. Member for South Hunts (Mr. Arthur H. Smith-Barry) on January 2, 1891, said—

“I have no wish to see the doors shut on many of these men who are now living outside their farms, no doubt very largely through their own fault, but still more largely through the fault of those who have lured them on to destruction. If a clause could be drawn that would enable the Commissioners to restore the evicted tenants in certain events, providing the security were good, I should certainly be very sorry to set my face against the restoration of such men.”

Yes, on certain conditions. I quite agree, and I say that the object of the Irish Government in issuing this Commission was to ascertain the conditions upon which these men might be advantageously restored, in the words of the right hon. Gentleman opposite, “to their ancient homes.” But the hon. Member who moved the reduction of this Vote forgets when he talks of these swindlers, of these fraudulent debtors, of these conspirators, that Section 13 of the Land Purchase Act did propose special and favourable treatment for these very men. The proposed clause specially aimed at the restoration of these very men.

\*MR. T. W. RUSSELL: On what terms?

MR. J. MORLEY: There is no point in that. My point is this: that the hon. Gentleman and the Government he supported did give special and favourable treatment to the men he is now denouncing. The hon. Gentleman has noticed that the Commission have confined their inquiries to the Plan of Campaign estates; but those are the very estates to which he himself confined his pleadings. On the discussion of Clause 13 the hon. Gentleman said—

“So far as the Plan of Campaign estates are concerned, this clause deals with evicted farms. I say it goes a considerable distance, and I believe it would settle three-fourths of the disputes on the Plan of Campaign estates,

I have always taken a strong line against the Plan of Campaign, but I am anxious and willing upon fair and reasonable terms to bring the fight to a close."

If these men were the kind of men the hon. Gentleman has been denouncing to-night as unfit for any special treatment, how was it that he was so anxious for their restoration then? The hon. Gentleman quoted some clauses in Mr. O'Kelly's Bill dealing with planters. Did the hon. Gentleman object in principle to measures being taken for dealing with the planters? He did not object in principle at all.

\*MR. T. W. RUSSELL: I think I did.

MR. J. MORLEY: Not on those sections. The only excuse the hon. Member gave for not dealing with the planters at the same time was that time and the possibilities of another place would not allow it. I say all this to show how utterly different was the frame of mind of the Leader of the Opposition and the hon. Gentleman then to the view they now take of this matter. The right hon. Gentleman opposite said that the healing of this long-existing sore was an absolute necessity upon the Plan of Campaign estates, and we are endeavouring to heal that very sore. What is the use, then, of taxing us with bringing in proposals, not in view of large considerations of public policy, but simply for relieving certain Members from responsibility for their actions? A great deal of what the hon. Member said to-night was condemnation of this Commission for restoring to the evicted tenants a right they have forfeited and lost. The very thing that Parliament did in June, 1891, was to restore to the evicted tenants a right which they had forfeited and lost. You undertook Section 13 with that very object. It is quite true, as the hon. Member says, that Section 13 rested entirely on voluntary agreement between the landlord and the tenant. It is quite true that the tenant could not be restored to his privileges against the will of a hostile landlord, and it is true that the Commission recommends restoration against the will of a hostile landlord; but that does not affect my proposition, that you were ready to make special provision for these men, and, what is more, you were not going to force

them upon the landlords. Upon whom did Section 13 impose these so-called knaves? Upon the State. It enabled tenants to go to the Land Commission and secure an advance. According to the hon. Member, these men are absolutely unworthy of credit by the landlord. Upon what ground, then, could it be contended that it was desirable that they should become debtors to the State? I do not know whether the Committee sees the point. Although you say these men were swindlers and fraudulent debtors, you thought them quite good enough to receive large advances of money from the National Exchequer. The hon. Member quoted a passage from my letter to the hon. Member for Longford, and he said it was one of the most shameless State Papers ever issued by a Minister. What is the statement as to which he uses such language as that? The statement was that the Plan of Campaign estates were full of evicted holdings that, with all dependent expenses, cost the Exchequer something like £45,000 a year, and the hon. Member says that I argued that that expenditure ought not to take place, and that the Executive Government ought not to protect the tenants of those holdings. A more ridiculous interpretation could not have been given. It is perfectly clear that the drift and pith of the reference to that expenditure was twofold: in the first instance, it was to give the public some way of measuring the operations in which these evicted farms involved the Government; and, secondly, to suggest to the minds of politicians whether £45,000 a year could not be more profitably spent than in keeping up what was admitted to be a mischievous state of things most urgently demanding a remedy. I would spend £450,000 a year to see the law carried out if it were necessary; but in spending money on a given political object I should like the public to know what that given object was costing them, and I should like them to consider whether the money could not be better spent. The hon. Gentleman did not use that language, but I have seen this Commission called a "revolutionary tribunal appointed to register a foregone conclusion." How was it—in what sense was it a tribunal? It had no pretence of jurisdiction; it had no sanction, nor any single part of the apparatus of judi-

cial power. It could not compel anybody to come before it; it could not punish anybody; it could impair nobody's legal right by a jot or tittle; they could neither decide nor enforce a single legal position. You might just as well say that the appointment of the Labour Commission, over which the Duke of Devonshire presides, was the appointment of a tribunal. Then one noble Lord, an Irish landlord, a nobleman who ought really to have known better, said that the appointment of this Commission was the most arbitrary and illegal thing that has been done for centuries, and that the Commission was arbitrarily directed to arrive at conclusions which the Irish Government dictated. There could be nothing more absolutely unreasonable and untrue. At question time an hon. Member opposite, in some of the questions he pressed on me, insinuated that I had in some way got possession of a draft copy of the Report and had pressed for alterations in it. That, I consider, hitting below the belt.

MR. BARTLEY (Islington, N.): As this insinuation is made, I think I have right to say that my questions were simply directed to the extraordinary lapse of time that took place before the Report was announced. It was announced to appear on the very day of the meeting of Parliament. That was officially stated. It was stated distinctly in several periodicals representing the views of the Party opposite that it would appear then. My questions were directed to know why the long period of six weeks had elapsed between that time and the publication of the Report.

MR. J. MORLEY: The hon. Member is entirely misinformed. The whole of this long period of six weeks exists wholly in his own imagination. The Report was not presented to the Lord Lieutenant until four or five days before it was sent to the printer, and came to this House. I ask the hon. Member, Did he or did he not insinuate—[*Cheers*]—did he not ask me whether the Report was not sent to the Chief Secretary before it was submitted to the Lord Lieutenant? Does the hon. Member withdraw or repudiate any such insinuation? [*Cries of "Withdraw!" and "Answer!"*] It makes very little difference to me whether he does or not, but I think gentlemen around the hon. Member must be

rather ashamed of a colleague who, having made an insinuation which he dare not put into a formal charge, has not the grace or the courtesy to withdraw it.

MR. BARTLEY: I must say I think it a very strong order to make an insinuation against me as counter to something that the right hon. Gentleman chooses to think I meant when I questioned him. [*Cries of "Order!" and interruption.*]

\*THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member rises to make a personal explanation.

MR. BARTLEY: I have stated distinctly that I wished to elicit information concerning this great lapse of time. The right hon. Gentleman says I am quite mistaken in having said that this Report was to be placed on the Table the first day of the Session. If I am wrong in that statement I regret having made it. [*Cries of "Apologise!"*] But I did wish to inquire why there was that great lapse of time, and if I suggested anything which the right hon. Gentleman considers a stroke below the belt I regret it extremely, and would wish to withdraw it entirely.

MR. J. MORLEY: I accept the hon. Member's withdrawal. But this shows the extraordinary state of mind hon. Members opposite, and hon. Gentlemen sitting there [pointing to the Liberal Unionists] get into about this Commission. They suspect me of acting arbitrarily and illegally. They suggest that I am as bad as Charles II.; and Mr. Justice Mathew is, I suppose, in their eyes, a Judge Jeffreys or Judge Scroggs. This shows the intolerably morbid frame of mind of hon. Members. This Commission is said to have been arbitrary, because it was appointed to carry out a predetermined line of action. So far from the conclusions of the Commission being foregone conclusions dictated by me, I quite feel that there is, perhaps, more than one recommendation of the Commission which would demand a great deal of consideration before, in my judgment, it could be safely recommended to Parliament. But I admit there was one foregone conclusion, and I will tell you what it was. It was that there was a social mischief existing in Ireland to which it was most desirable that an effectual remedy should be applied in the interests not of one class—not only of the tenant



or of the landlord, but of everybody, and that remedy was to be applied, as the right hon. Gentleman opposite said, and as the hon. Member who preceded me himself has said, in the restoration of these tenants to their old homes whether as tenants or as purchasers. Therefore, the only foregone conclusion as to this Commission was a foregone conclusion which was yours quite as much as mine. The hon. Member charges me with packing the Commission. Let us examine that statement. It is disagreeable to go into personal questions, but this is an occasion which demands it. I have no intention of shirking the matter. I am charged with packing the Commission. Now, who were the Commissioners as originally appointed? Two of them were officials of the highest competence experience, and tried responsibility in questions connected with the land, Mr. O'Brien and Mr. Murphy. The hon. Member says that exactly because they were officials they ought not to have been appointed on the Commission.

\***MR. T. W. RUSSELL** : I did not say that. What I did say was, that one of these gentlemen being actually responsible for evictions, ought not to have sat in judgment on himself.

**MR. J. MORLEY** : There was no sitting in judgment on themselves in the matter. My object in selecting these two gentlemen was to secure two men, with trained official minds, who had a complete and minute knowledge of all the details and all the aspects of the land question in Ireland, and you could not, I venture to think, have got two men more competent. Something has been said about Mr. O'Brien. The hon. Member says he knows him—well, a more scrupulously conscientious and upright man than Mr. O'Brien does not exist. As to Mr. Reddington, he was born and bred in the atmosphere of officialism and landlordism. An hon. Gentleman said the other night that Mr. Reddington did not become a Home Ruler until he had sold every acre of land that he possessed. As a matter of fact, I understand that Mr. Reddington moved a Home Rule resolution at a meeting of the Galway Grand Jury four years before he parted with a single acre of land, and—I do not know whether I am glad or sorry to say it—but Mr. Reddington still holds some thousands of acres of land in Ireland. [An hon. MEM-

BER : Where?] I do not know. But acres or no acres, Mr. Reddington is a thoroughly upright and honourable man. Then as to Mr. Roche, he was added to the Commission because it was felt he had great knowledge of the Irish land system and its complex law, which probably the Judge would not feel himself competent to give an opinion. As to the Judge, I am not going to say one word in vindication of his probity, and of the sincerity of the desire with which he undertook what proved to be a very thankless task—the sincerity of his desire to do a service to his own particular country and to Parliament. He did not go as a partisan. I was rather surprised that the hon. Member below the Gangway did not see that he answered his own point as to this Commission being a packed Commission when he told us that when the Commission opened it did so with a fair prospect of arriving at the truth.

\***MR. T. W. RUSSELL** : I expressly said it opened with that fair prospect, because those concerned were willing to overlook a packed Commission and to look to the President. I expected better things of him.

**MR. J. MORLEY** : In that case, why charge me with packing the Commission? If I had devised a Commission which struck even political opponents as a Commission before which there might be a fair prospect of arriving at the truth, where is the sense and justice of saying that I deliberately packed it? Mr. Justice Mathew carried on that inquiry in my judgment—and I think the Report sufficiently shows that that was the state of his mind—in a thorough spirit of impartiality. ["Oh, oh!"] Well, you have got the Report before you.

\***MR. T. W. RUSSELL** : Why did Mr. Murphy retire?

**MR. J. MORLEY** : I do not wish to blame Mr. Murphy or to comment upon his motives for retiring; but his motives are not to be our standard, our final standard, determining the conduct of the President of the Commission. I say the fact that the landlords accepted the Commission and determined to appear before it—some of them instructed hon. and learned Members of this House to appear for them—shows that there was not, and could not be, any substance in

these charges about packing. What is our position? If it had been packed do you think the landlords would have recognised the Commission? What is your proposition? There were four Nationalists on the Commission, none of them active politicians. Is your proposition, then, this: that it is impossible for men to divest themselves of political bias and Party prejudice, no matter how serious the responsibility or how grave the duties, which a public position may cast upon them? Is that your position. Let me warn you that if it is it is a very dangerous one. I will give an illustration of what I mean. The Chief Secretary had the misfortune the other day to come under certain criticism in the Court of Queen's Bench in Ireland. The Court on that occasion was composed, with one exception only, of learned gentlemen who are strong opponents of Her Majesty's Government. Would you not think it very ill of me if I were to say that the Judgment of these learned dignitaries was worthless because they were political opponents of mine? I never said anything of the kind, and I never will say so. I believe that men of the strongest political passion and prejudice, when they are placed in certain positions of great responsibility, allow or may allow, their political prejudices and passions to sink into the background. When the landlords by their action, which I have always regarded as lamentable and unfortunate, had maimed and mutilated the usefulness of this Commission, the perseverance and the courage with which Mr. Justice Mathew and his two colleagues stuck to their task and carried it through, amidst a storm of virulence some of it truly shameful and contemptible—the courage, perseverance, and sense of public duty which they displayed, I say, will always be recognised by the Government at all events. I believe that when this Debate comes to a close, it will be felt that no man could have been worse used than Mr. Justice Mathew in the attacks that have been made upon him. The hon. Member for South Tyrone talked about Mr. Justice Mathew's remarks about Lord Clanricarde. I have read his opening remarks, and I find nothing very culpable in them. But what has the hon. Member himself said about him? I do not want to bring

Lord Clanricarde himself into this discussion. I am going to quote the hon. Member. I am not going to do it for the purpose of really convicting him or trying to convict him of making too much of the Judge's remarks when he himself have gone a great deal further. But I want the Committee to listen to a few remarks of the hon. Member who to-night has been declaiming strongly against collectivism, against State interference, and those compulsory powers being given, and so forth. What did the hon. Member say? He has gone pretty far, I think. This is what he wrote in 1889—

"What Lord Clanricarde will do and what ought to be done with Lord Clanricarde are questions of urgent and grave public importance at the present moment. . . . Anxious to bottom the Clanricarde story for myself, I have spent the best part of a week on the estate. . . . Against Lord Clanricarde I hope to 'set naught down in malice.' . . . But as I have formed clear and definite opinions as to what ought to be done with his Lordship, I shall speak plainly. . . . I now come to Lord Clanricarde himself. . . . He has never been near the place since 1872. I say this man has abdicated his position. He has rights, and is not slow to demand the support of the Crown in enforcing them. It is time to tell his Lordship that he has also duties, and that by the systematic neglect of these in every particular he has become a public danger to the State. . . . And on the ground that Lord Clanricarde has so completely abdicated his functions as to imperil the interests of the State itself, I, for one, should heartily support a special Bill to relieve the County of Galway of his influence. I may be told this is an extreme proposal. Of course it is. But I see no wrong to Lord Clanricarde in it. Let the Land Commissioner value his land. Let him be paid for it. Let him have his ducats. Thank God, there is but one Clanricarde! If it were otherwise, the country would be in worse plight than it is."

\*MR. T. W. RUSSELL: All I desire to say about that is this: I do not wish to make a speech. It is one thing for me to say that, and another thing for a Judge trying this case to say it.

MR. J. MORLEY: I am not finding fault with the hon. Member for what he said; but I do wonder that, after that, he should come to the House to-night and make it an article of a tremendous charge against the Commission that Mr. Justice Mathew introduced the principle of compulsion when he is himself prepared for whatever you like—to take drastic measures worthy of a revolutionary tribunal—to have a special Bill to expropriate Lord Clanricarde from his

property. Well, Parliament one of these days may think that if a man is a centre of social disturbance there ought to be some mode of dealing with him. I am not going into that now; I am not going into all the recommendations of the Commissioners. The upshot of those recommendations appears to me to be—first, the selection of an arbitrating tribunal; and, secondly, a grant of money for facilitating the operation of the public policy which the Commissioners desire. The hon. Member for South Tyrone really seems to think that most of the hon. Members of this House do not know anything about the principles on which the Irish land system rests. I am not now arguing for compulsory restoration or compulsory arbitration. I do ask the Committee to remember that the Commissioners were dealing with Ireland, and not with England, and that the whole land system in Ireland rests upon a principle of compulsory arbitration. I do not think right hon. Gentlemen opposite will disagree with me, although they may dislike that system. The hon. Member spoke of shopkeepers demanding the same treatment as that now proposed to be given to the evicted tenants. Does he not see there is no parallel? The landlords being what they are, and the land system being what it is, it is far too late in the day to compare a debt due to a landlord, or the relations between landlords and tenants, with the ordinary relations between a shopkeeper and his customers? If the hon. Member thinks it monstrous that there should be arbitration, I answer that the Land Commission deals every year with hundreds of cases of dispute between landlord and tenant on that principle, and, that being so, why should it *à priori* be monstrous and intolerable for the Land Commission to step in and settle these disputes about eviction? Whether you think it practicable or not, you can at least admit that this proposal by the Evicted Tenants Commission—this addition by the Commission to the vast range of discretionary power already possessed by the Land Commission—is as a mere drop in the ocean. It is idle to abuse the Commissioners as anarchial, immoral, and propounders of dishonest policy, when they are simply once more applying that principle, method, and practice which

is the foundation of the Irish land system. The hon. Member said that the Commissioners, in their recommendations, proposed to give powers of compulsory purchase. That is not so. The hon. Member should have read the recommendations. There is no power of compulsory sale in the recommendations, and in that respect the hon. Member has misrepresented the finding of the Commission. He talks about collectivism. Has he forgotten the Arrears Act? There is some £800,000 of public money or more used to heal a social wound, and, therefore, so far as principle goes (and I am not saying whether it could be rightly applied in this case), the hon. Member must have forgotten the history of the land question. The Arrears Act was, in fact, the payment of a bankrupt account. As for compulsory powers, I doubt if, in 99 cases out of 100, compulsion is necessary. It is to nobody's interest that this land without tenants and these tenants without land should remain as they are, a dark and dangerous blot on Irish society. It is not to the tenants' interests that these lands should remain as they are; it is not to the landlords' interests, and certainly not to the interests of the State. No landlord can desire to have these tenantless and unprofitable lands left on his hands, and our hope was that this Commission would be the first step towards bringing the landlords and tenants together. My own impression is—and I give it for what it is worth—that the reason why Section 13 has proved inoperative is, that the landlords and tenants could not bring themselves to be the first to propose terms. The landlord felt that if he moved, the tenant would suppose that he would get the advantage, and the tenant thought the same thing in his own case. Our object was to take the first step towards erecting a tribunal of this kind. I admit with regret that, owing to what I must consider to be the unwise action of the landlords—I go further, and say the rather unpatriotic action of the landlords—that hope of ours has been, so far, baffled. But the institution of a tribunal—an arbitrating tribunal such as this Commission recommends—is, in my opinion, the beginning of any chance of settling the difficulty. The question, though full of difficulties, is not in itself a question of great amount. The rental

on the 17 estates into which the Commissioners inquired is *plus* the cost about £28,000. I know that there are outlying claims in regard to restoration of about £2,000 more, but the Commissioners had not time to go into all those claims. My own impression is that no small number of them would melt away upon an inquiry made by the Land Commission or some Special Commission. As for those who are called "planters," many of them do not want to stay, and the landlords do not particularly want them to stay; and if any one of them considers his interest a substantial one, the recommendations of the Commissioners do not do him an injustice. There are a great many other observations I should like to make on the general merits of the question apart from the Land Commission, but this is not the proper time to make them. All that I have to say now is that the Government will proceed to consider, without delay and in the light of the Report that has been made to us, and the evidence collected for us, what practical course it is now best to pursue and what proposals should be made, and it is my hope—although hon. Gentlemen opposite and Irish landlords regard me as an enemy—that even now, during this interval, the landlords may return to that frame of mind which I have shown they exhibited through their spokesmen in this House in June, 1891. The last matter to which I will call the attention of the Committee is what the Commissioners say in paragraphs 16 and 17 of their Report—

"The evicted tenants in many cases have been living in huts in the vicinity of the estates, provided by some of the Associations formed for their defence, or have gone to reside in the neighbouring towns or villages. They have been and are now maintained by weekly grants from funds raised by public subscriptions.

The present condition of the evicted farms on many of the estates is deplorable. The land has gone to waste. Fields once cultivated and fairly productive are now covered with furze and weeds. Tracts reclaimed by the industry of the tenants from bog or mountain are returning to their original condition. The former tenants, with little or no occupation, hang about their old farms, and have never relinquished the hope of reinstatement. It is not surprising that, in view of this condition of things, the authorities have considered the presence of an additional police force on many of the estates advisable."

I think the Committee will feel that such a state of things as that, which is not new, but which has existed for six, eight, and in some cases even ten, years, is one

which no Minister, to whatever Party he may belong, can look on either from an administrative or social or political point of view without the deepest regret and the strongest resolution that he will do all in his power to persuade Parliament to put an end to such a state of things.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: It was impossible for those of us who have listened to the speech of the right hon. Gentleman to do so without a great feeling of sympathy for him in the difficulties in which he is placed. He has to endeavour to perform two tasks, both of them, I venture to say, impossible—to defend the Commission—and I am sure that, whatever were its constitution and intentions, it has certainly proceeded on lines which no Commission in this country has ever proceeded on before; and, in the second place, he has had to discuss proposals of that Commission which he knows can never be carried out, in a tone which shall not give too great umbrage to hon. Gentlemen who in August last said that the condition of these tenants was one of imminent peril, and who pressed for an early solution of their difficulties, and who are now told, after an inquiry that has been going on for nine months, that the Government will do their best to consider the Report of the Commission with the view, if possible, of arriving at a conclusion on the subject. I should not have intervened, at any rate so early in this Debate, had not the right hon. Gentleman apparently founded his whole policy upon certain speeches which I made in this House, and on certain legislative proposals to which I gave my assent. But the right hon. Gentleman has surely not considered the spirit either of my speeches or of my legislative provisions. What did I say? I said that were I an Irish landlord I would never give in to the Plan of Campaign; but that if the Plan of Campaign came to an end, I, as an Irish landlord anxious for the peace of the country, would do my best to obliterate the traces of ancient bitterness and come as far as possible to an agreement with those by whom I believed I had been doubly wronged. These are the sentiments I expressed two years ago, and they are the sentiments I hold at this hour. But does the right hon. Gentleman see no difference between recommending to a man an

arrangement which may be for the peace of his neighbourhood and forcing down the throat of that man an arrangement which may be grossly unjust? I am not prepared to recommend generosity—I am not prepared to compel it at the expense of somebody else; and the right hon. Gentleman, if he gives a little quiet consideration to it, will see that to found upon advice of that kind, given by me to all concerned with Irish land, a justification for any proposal such as that adumbrated by this Commission, or even for the appointment of the Commission itself, is wholly absurd. I must say one word about this Section 13, upon which so much has been based by the Government. The right hon. Gentleman appears to find in Section 13 a precedent for any action, however monstrous, by which a tenant, however iniquitous, might force upon a landlord, however unwilling. There is no argument of that kind to be found in it. If Section 13 was an advantage to one of the two classes concerned, it was of advantage to the landlord rather than of the tenant, because it said to the landlord, "If you choose to take back your tenant, you may do so in terms which will enable you to dispose of your land, and which will prevent the tenant immediately afterwards repudiating the agreement." Therefore, undoubtedly, landlords and tenants might have come together under Section 13. The section is no precedent, and cannot be twisted into a precedent, for forcing upon landlords tenants whom they will be unwilling to receive. The section left the power of selection to the landlords. If the landlord was of opinion that the tenant was unfit, he need not have taken him back; but, under the present proposals, every tenant, be his qualification what it may, is to have an equal and equivalent right to take a farm from the landlord, and, as far as I can make out, to take the money from the taxpayer. I leave that point to come to an aspect of this question on which I have more than once expressed my own opinion, and which has, perhaps, produced more debate than any other—namely, the composition and conduct of the Commission itself. I do not wish to dwell on that aspect of the question. I have said some things, perhaps very severe things, on the conduct of Sir

James Mathew and the other members of the Commission. I withdraw none of them. I believe them to have been absolutely well-founded, and to have been within the mark; but, because I do not withdraw them, I do not wish to repeat them. This I will say: that the right hon. Gentleman does not appear to have the most distant glimmer of comprehension as to what we even mean when we assert that the Commission was composed unfairly and has acted unfairly. He appears to think it an adequate reply to say that the Member for South Tyrone has himself used language about Lord Clanricarde, even stronger than that of Sir James Mathew. There is no doubt that he has used language which may or may not have been justifiable.

**MR. J. MORLEY:** My point was that the hon. Member for South Tyrone, himself, had made a proposal for compulsory expropriation.

**MR. A. J. BALFOUR:** That proposal of my hon. Friend may be good or bad, and might or might not disqualify my hon. Friend for being the head of a Commission. But is it a justification for the head of a Commission, without hearing a single word of evidence—good, bad, or indifferent—taking the whole world into his confidence and announcing that he had already made up his mind upon the demerits of Lord Clanricarde. The right hon. Gentleman has said this was not a Judicial Commission, and need not be safeguarded or even composed as a Judicial Commission would have to be. Well, Sir, it was not a Judicial Commission in any sense of the word, but it was a Commission which took upon itself to pronounce upon the merits of individual cases—to say that one party was right and another party wrong. When a Commission appointed by an Executive Government has or assumes duties of this kind, it ought to be composed with a scrupulous regard to impartiality and fairness. Put it as you like, the antecedents of every one of the three men who have signed this Report were enough to show that they were only fit to be put on that class of Commission on which both sides are represented by avowed partisans and have full power of criticism and cross-examination. The value of their decisions is discounted by the statements they had all of them made

with respect to the land question—and no ingenuity on the part of the right hon. Gentleman would ever make out that the three gentlemen who have signed the Report have the slightest title to be considered as anything more than partizans of one side. The right hon. Gentleman admitted that they were not to be considered as Judges. Have they the slightest claim to be regarded as investigators? Have they found out and laid before Parliament the facts of the case? Why, Sir, they have not even discovered that the Plan of Campaign was a political device. So ignorant are they of the very elements of the question that all they discover is that it unfortunately leads to “unhappy agrarian controversy.” So much for their powers of investigation. How about the action of the tenants whose cases they examine? The Irish tenant before he is evicted, and, therefore, before we have to consider whether he is or is not to be reinstated, is hedged round with every species of safeguard and endowed with every species of privilege. He may require that a fair rent should be fixed, that eviction should be stayed, that his interest in the holding should be realised. The right hon. Gentleman has the evidence before him. Can he point to a single case in which any of these tenants were asked why they permitted themselves to be evicted without having used the numerous privileges with which the law has endowed them? If this question was never asked and answered, how on earth can this House form any estimate as to the real hardship, if hardship there be, that is inflicted on these tenants? One more point as to the value of these Commissioners’ investigations. You have only to compare the statements they authoritatively make in their Report with the facts as revealed by the landlords’ statements to see that not a single one of their assertions with regard to the campaign estates can be taken without the utmost caution and careful collation of evidence. If any future historian should be ill-advised enough to endeavour to obtain the facts about the Plan of Campaign estates from the Report of the Commission, he will find that not only are all the material facts omitted, but that the facts given are misstated. So much for these gentlemen as Judges and investigators. What are we to say of them as states-

men and advisers of the Government? They propose that there should be forcible reinstatement of the evicted tenants. There cannot be forcible reinstatement without forcible eviction; and therefore the practical outcome of their investigations is that this House, which has done so much to safeguard the interests of the tenant, should make itself the instrument of a gigantic scheme of forcible eviction. Having got rid of a great many tenants, what are they to do for the tenants who are to be reinstated? So far as I can make out, they are going to give them terms which even in the history of Irish land legislation, which has been rich in wonderful terms for tenants, have never been approached. And at whose expense? The farms are to be re-stocked at the expense of the Guardians. How do the Guardians get their money? My hon. Friend opposite put the case in a concrete form, and I was amazed that no reply was made to his observations. He took the case of a landlord in the West of Ireland, owning perhaps a large part of a Union, and the bulk of whose tenants pay £4 a year. In the case of the few tenants who pay over £4 he will pay half the rates, whilst in the case of those who pay under £4 he will pay every sixpence of the rates, so that the process proposed means that the farms are to be re-stocked at the expense of the landlord, who has been robbed by a political combination for the last five years. The Guardians are not the only people who are to suffer in order that these fraudulent and bankrupt ex-tenants may be reinstated. These men are to be compelled, if the landlord desires it, to become the purchasers of their farms. The House will recollect that under the Land Purchase Act a fixed sum was allocated to each county for land purchase—a sum by no means adequate to purchase more than a comparatively small fraction of the land in the county. It appears that these men are to diminish that already too meagre sum at the expense of the solvent, paying tenants, who would be glad to purchase, but cannot if the sum be exhausted. Therefore, it is the solvent tenant, in the second place, who is to be asked pay for carrying out this scheme. In the third place, so far as I can make out, the payment is not to be confined to the Guardians, but is to

be extended to the whole of the taxpayers of the United Kingdom. We are asked to make a grant out of the public money to help a class who, whatever claims they may have on our pity, will not be alleged, by the right hon. Gentleman himself to be amongst the most deserving of the Irish tenants. Sir, proposals of this kind may be made in Blue Books; they are not made by responsible Governments in the House of Commons. To those Members from Ireland who, with touching simplicity, accepted, in August last, the promises of the Government that this question should be dealt with, and dealt with soon, I would point out that the difficulties of the proposed solution, or any solution, must surely appear, even to them, to be so great that it will be in vain for them henceforth to tell their friends in Ireland that a great measure of reinstatement is going to be carried out by the Government. The hon. Member for Cork City (Mr. W. O'Brien), speaking on the 13th May last, said there was a certainty of the adoption by the new Government of the glorious principles of amnesty and reinstatement. The hon. Member knows now how much amnesty he is going to get. The Home Secretary has left no doubt in his mind on that point. The amount of reinstatement he is going to get will just about equal the amnesty he will obtain. Hon. Members opposite, when in Opposition in 1886, reproached us with having delayed the solution of the great agrarian difficulty in Ireland by the appointment of a Commission, and the present Prime Minister and others have never ceased, in defiance of the facts of history, to go about the country saying that our non-acceptance of Mr. Parnell's Bill and our deferring of this question until the Commission had reported were not the cause, but the justification of the Plan of Campaign. It appears that more than one Government can defer inconvenient questions by appointing a Commission, and I am amazed that none of the reproaches that were so lavishly directed against us have been used against right hon. Gentlemen opposite. It is incredible that any Government should come down to this House at the very moment when it is proposing a Home Rule Bill under which Ireland is to manage her own affairs, and ask us to deal with this question.

*Mr. A. J. Balfour*

There was a time when the Government held the view that it was a matter of duty and of honour that the Irish Question should be settled before the Home Rule Question was settled. They have altered their view, although I am not sure that they have given any arguments for the change. Under the circumstances, however, it is useless to ask us to contribute money or the House of Commons to devote time to the settlement of the question. If the Government believe in their Home Rule Bill let them settle these questions by means of that Bill. Do not ask us, in the first place, the Guardians in the next place, and the purchasing tenants in the third place to give privileges unheard of in the history of Irish land legislation to men sometimes to be pitied, sometimes to be blamed, but who, whether they be dupes or whether they stand in some more guilty position, have undoubtedly made themselves responsible for an amount of fraud and an amount of suffering such as have seldom been inflicted in the history of the Irish agrarian question on any class or any Party.

MR. DIAMOND (Monaghan, N.) said, the Chief Secretary for Ireland had said that the Irish land system was founded on compulsory arbitration. He differed to some extent from that description, because he thought the Irish land system was a system of landlord spoliation tempered by Land Courts. The right hon. Gentleman had also described the effects of the Arrears Act as something resembling a composition in bankruptcy; and it must be admitted that the land system of Ireland, and indeed of England and Scotland, was a system which had made a large number of people bankrupt. The hon. Member for South Tyrone had spoken of compulsory purchase as an electioneering dodge, but it was the truth to say that the hon. Member himself had advocated in South Tyrone compulsory purchase very much as an electioneering dodge. The men who had been evicted in Ireland had been evicted in many cases for rents which did not amount to one-fifteenth, and in some cases to one-tenth, of what was represented by their own interest in the farms from which they were driven. When robbery under the Plan of Campaign was talked of he would ask had not the Irish landlords been engaged

for several generations in robbing their tenants? and if there was anything in the shape of restitution to be made that restitution should come from the Irish landlords to the Irish farmers. The hon. Member for South Tyrone had said, "Thou shalt not steal." When had the Irish landlords acted on that principle. The hon. Member had also said that Sir James Mathew had prevented any landlords from appearing before the Commission. Well, the Scottish Provident Institution had appeared before the Commission, and they did not appear to be dissatisfied with the result. It was with the estate of the Scottish Provident Institution that he wished particularly to deal. Two or three generations ago the estate came into the hands of the Ancketell family, and the rental was £50 a year. The rental at the present time was £2,200 a year; and before the rents were reduced by the Courts it stood at £2,800 a year. That enormous increase in the landlord's takings represented the improvements of the tenants. Talk of breaking the Commandments—why, the Irish landlords had broken every one of them! The chief interest in the land did not belong to the landlord, who merely took the land at its prairie value, and the tenants made it what is was worth, so that when men were evicted they were evicted not from the landlord's land or the landlord's house, but from their own land and from the houses which either themselves or their forefathers had built. The estate got into Court, and through the default of a mortgager it fell into the hands of the Scottish Provident Institution. A number of the tenants got reductions from the Land Courts of from 25 to 30 per cent., and it was absolutely false for the Institution to say that voluntary reductions were made. There was one notorious case on the estate—the case of a tenant named Paterson—which illustrated the infamy of Irish landlordism. He did not undertake to decide whether the chief infamy for that case lay on the shoulders of the landlord who borrowed from the Scottish Provident or upon the Institution itself. They were so closely connected that they formed between them a combination whose acts showed what it was possible to do in the name of law, under the landlord system in Ireland, and it lay between them to allot their respective shares of the odium

between them. The case of this tenant (Mr. Paterson) was tried several times in the Law Courts, Dublin, and, as Sir James Mathew referred to the estate in rather favourable terms, he would like to quote some of the remarks of the Judge who tried the case. Judge Flanagan said to the agent of the Scottish Provident, "What do you want?" Mr. Scott said, "My Lord, the rent is too low." Then the Judge continued—

"That is not it. I will tell you what you want; you want to take £2,000 out of that man's money, and put it into your own pockets; but you shan't, if it is in my power to prevent it."

The Judge, however, could not prevent it. The Society called upon him to deliver Judgment. What did he say, as stated in their own pamphlet?—

"Mr. Ancketell got possession of the land from a gentleman named Woods. It was a very miserable holding—a holding, comparatively speaking, very valueless. I now come to the other question, and it is a very serious question—that is, the expenditure by Mr. Paterson on the estate. I have not the slightest doubt that when Mr. Paterson went into possession of the lands they were comparatively waste. I have not the slightest doubt in my own mind that Mr. Paterson expended large sums of money, amounting to thousands of pounds, in permanent and valuable improvements on the holding; but how far the Scottish Provident are bound to those improvements, and how far Mr. Paterson is entitled to relief in respect to the improvements made by him, are totally different questions."

The Judge further says—

"I really do not know that I ought to go further in the case. I have very little to add, beyond this, that I am coerced to give my Judgment."

After this the Scottish Provident proposed to Mr. Paterson that his rent should be raised from £25 to £100; that he should agree to pay 20 years' purchase for the farm, and get the money advanced by the State. That was one of the methods by which Irish landlords endeavoured to get good prices for farms which were not their own, but which really belonged to the tenants. Yet Sir James Mathew had declared that the Institution in Paterson's case was blameless. Probably he had not read what Judge Flanagan had said. He (Mr. Diamond) also wished to investigate the statements made before the Evicted Tenants' Commission, on behalf of the Scottish Provident, on which Sir James Mathew evidently founded his state-



ment. The President of the Commission asked Mr. Parke, the agent of the Institution—

"Can you suggest how the tenants on that portion could pay the arrears?"

Mr. Parke replied—

"I cannot; but since the Scottish Provident became the owners, they have never asked any tenant to pay more than one year's rent each year. Any tenant who paid a year's rent was never disturbed for another year, notwithstanding that he owed six years' arrears."

Yet this Mr. Parke, writing to Mr. Fiddes, of Aughnacloy, on the 7th March, 1891, in reference to the case of Mary McKenna, a tenant, said—

"If she likes to sell at once, I will accept two-thirds of the arrears due and costs. If not, I will make an example of her for the encouragement of the other tenants."

In another letter he made the statement—

"If she chooses to sell, I will make a liberal reduction in the arrears, but I will leave the farm derelict and knock down the house rather than continue her as a tenant under any terms."

This was the gentleman who declared in his evidence before the Evicted Tenants Commission that none of the tenants had been asked for more than one year's rent in a single year. In this very case he refused two years' rent, and threatened to pull down the house for the encouragement of the other tenants. When Sir James Mathew declared that—

"The Institution has been entirely exonerated, and there is not the slightest foundation for making any charge against the Institution of having acted unjustly or unfairly,"

he was labouring under the disadvantage of not having had the facts fully before him. As the son of an evicted tenant he was glad to stand up in the House for the first time and say something against the system of Irish landlordism, which had been the bane of his country for generations. It had been said that crime had dogged the footsteps of the Land League. But it was landlordism that had produced the Land League and the Plan of Campaign. Crime had dogged the footsteps of Irish landlords for generations. It had provoked evil and suffering in Ireland; and if one of the results of the Evicted Tenants Commission was to drive another nail in the coffin of Irish landlordism, he thanked the Government from his heart for having established that Commission.

*Mr. Diamond*

\*MR. NEVILLE (Liverpool, Exchange) said, he rose merely to direct the attention of the House to the language which had been used by the hon. Member for South Tyrone in regard to the composition of the Evicted Tenants Commission. He could only speak for one member of that Commission; but he thought he was right in saying that no Member of the Bar in the House would differ from him in describing Sir James Mathew as second to none upon the Bench so far as reputation, ability, integrity and impartiality were concerned. He believed the Chief Secretary, when he appointed Sir James Mathew as a member of the Commission, was convinced he was appointing a man whose reputation was far beyond the range of suspicion. No man was more alive than he was to the fact that Judges were just as open to prejudice and partiality as any other human creatures. He had never assented to the argument so often heard in the House, that because a man was made a Judge, one must treat it as certain that no prejudice on his part will interfere with the soundness of his judgments, but if they were to have a Judge at all on this Commission they could not have a Judge, who in the opinion of the profession best fitted to form an opinion, was less likely to be moved by prejudice or partiality than Sir James Mathew. It did not seem to occur to some Members that there were two sides to this question as well as to every other question; that there was something above and beyond the landlords' view of the question; and he did not think that Sir James Mathew could be properly charged with prejudice because he had seen, and seen apparently with clearness, the other view—the evicted tenants' view of the situation. He did not believe there would be found in the House a man who was really competent to speak on behalf of the profession to which he (Mr. Neville) belonged, who would state that in his opinion Sir James Mathew was not as competent and as impartial a person to be appointed on the Commission as could reasonably be found.

\*MR. WILLIAM KENNY (Dublin, St. Stephen's Green) said, he supported the Motion of his hon. Friend the Member for South Tyrone. He was one of those who was present on the opening day

of the Commission, and he had had an opportunity, therefore, of judging for himself by personal observation whether the proceedings, on that day at least, were conducted with the strict impartiality which the Chief Secretary for Ireland and the hon. and learned Member who had just sat down attributed to Sir James Mathew and his colleagues. The question really to be decided by the Motion was whether or not the British taxpayer should be asked to pay this sum of over £2,000 in respect of a Report which he regarded as a really monstrous and indecent Report—indecent in its principles by attempting to force upon landlords the compulsory re-instatement of men who were really in the position of paupers, and doing that on the ground of an alleged principle supposed to be set up by the 13th section of the Act of 1891. The Chief Secretary had said that Sir James Mathew had carried on the inquiry in a spirit of impartiality from beginning to end. It was sufficient for him to say in reply to that statement that upon the second or third day of the proceedings the gentleman who was supposed by the Chief Secretary to, in some respect, represent the landlords' interest on the Commission, retired on account, as that gentleman stated, of the partiality displayed by the President of the Commission in his opening statement on the very first day of the Commission. It seemed to him, listening to the speech of the Chief Secretary, that the right hon. Gentleman adopted an apologetic tone, and while the right hon. Gentleman asserted over and over again that the original design of the Commission was a *bonâ fide* attempt on the part of the Government to settle the question of the evicted tenants in Ireland; while he alleged that the procedure of the Commission had been conducted with strict impartiality; while he defended the conclusions arrived at by the Commission, and stated that the Government would consider how they would act on these conclusions, the rest of his speech was confined to allegations of what had been said on other occasions in respect to the evicted tenants by the hon. Gentleman the Mover of the Motion, by the hon. Member for South Hauts (Mr. Smith-Barry), and by the Leader of the Opposition. The Leader of the Opposition had shown that former statements made by

him as to the evicted tenants had for their foundation the voluntary re-instatement of the evicted tenants in case the landlords and tenants came together for the purpose, and he thought it would be impossible for the right hon. Gentleman, who had to speak later on in the Debate, to refer to any statement made by any right hon. or hon. Gentleman opposite, indicating that the policy of re-instatement was to be such as that proposed by the conclusions arrived at by this small Commission. What, in the first place, was the pretext upon which the Commission was appointed? They had been told before the close of the last Session in minatory tones by the right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury that it would be well for landlords and tenants to come to some agreement during the period that was to elapse between August and the opening of the present Session of Parliament, and, following upon that statement of the Prime Minister, this Commission was brought into existence in the month of September or October, 1892. They were told by the Chief Secretary that for the support of the extra police that were required in Ireland in connection with the evicted tenants a sum of £45,000 a year was necessary, and it was suggested by the Chief Secretary, not only in 1892, but again to-night, that that £45,000 might be applied to better purposes in the United Kingdom than for the protection of persons who suffered in Ireland by the Plan of Campaign. For what purposes were these police necessary? In 1886 or 1887 there was, as everyone knew, a strike against rent throughout Ireland. That strike was a part of the conspiracy, for the purpose of rendering government in Ireland impossible. He should like to ask by whom was that conspiracy and that strike against rent—by whom was it promoted? It was promoted by men who, by a Commission appointed by Act of Parliament, had been found guilty of having entered into a conspiracy, by a system of crime and outrage, for the purpose of expelling the "English garrison." That conspiracy, as his hon. Friend the Member for South Tyrone (Mr. T. W. Russell) had shown, was condemned by the highest legal authority in Ireland, and not alone by the highest legal authority, but by the highest eccle-

siastical authority in Ireland, as a criminal conspiracy. Well, for what purpose were these police necessary? Who were the persons who had suffered by the Plan of Campaign and the strike against rent? They were the landlords, some of the unfortunate tenants themselves, and the labourers and others in the employment of the landlords of Ireland. These were the persons who had incurred the resentment of the promoters of the Plan of Campaign, and it was necessary to protect them from the violence of those who had refused to pay their rent and had been evicted in consequence. That was what the police were there for—to protect these unfortunate people. But what was the Evicted Tenants Commission appointed for? Certain liabilities had been incurred in order to keep these people in the immediate vicinity of the farms from which they were evicted. These liabilities were incurred by hon. Members below the Gangway opposite, by the hon. Member for Mayo (Mr. John Dillon), and the hon. Member for Cork (Mr. William O'Brien), and they were incurred with the object of making the Government of Ireland impossible. That, fortunately, they were not able to do; but what they did do was to render the Government of Ireland expensive. He asked again what were the police there for? The evicted tenants were there either with the intention of breaking the law or they were not. If they were there with the intent of breaking the law then, as the right hon. Gentleman had himself admitted to-night, not ten times £45,000 a year ought to be regarded as too large for the purpose of enforcing the law; if they did not intend to break the law then the £45,000 a year was not applied in respect of these tenants at all. So that they had it now that the £45,000 a year was simply applied by the late Government of Ireland in maintaining the law in Ireland. And what was the object of this Commission and the object of the speech of the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant (Mr. J. Morley) but to effect a complete surrender to the lawless and disorderly classes in Ireland. It was simply a sop to the Plan of Campaign, and if any additional illustration was required for the purpose of showing how the Plan of Campaign was viewed by the present Members of the Government, and

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particularly by the Chief Secretary, he might refer to the answer the right hon. Gentleman gave to a question addressed to him to-night, viz., that a sum of £50 had been paid out of the Imperial Exchequer to one of the solicitors conducting the case of the evicted tenants and that the Treasury and the Irish Government had under their consideration the giving of a substantial sum to a gentleman named Kilbride, a solicitor who represented the evicted tenants, not alone in this particular case, but in many others throughout Ireland. That gave an idea of the purposes to which funds at the disposal of the Government were to be applied, and he presumed at the instigation of the Evicted Tenants Commission. He submitted to the House that that application of Imperial money was a most monstrous and most unconstitutional application of the funds placed at the disposal of the Treasury. It was really a subscription to the funds of a criminal conspiracy, because if the money were paid to the solicitors of the evicted tenants, it went in relief of costs that should otherwise come out of the funds of the Plan of Campaign. As to Section 13 of the Act of 1891, that had been already observed upon by the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. A. J. Balfour). That section had for its basis and foundation the principle of voluntary reinstatement of the tenants; to enable the tenants, by agreement with their landlords, to assume the status of actual and existing tenants, whereby they might apply to the Land Commission for a loan for the purpose of purchasing their holdings. It was idle to throw it in the face of his hon. Friend the Member for South Tyrone (Mr. T. W. Russell) that what was contemplated in 1891 was other than a voluntary proceeding between the landlord and tenant. Throughout that section, and so far as he remembered throughout the Debate upon that Bill, the question of compulsory reinstatement of the tenants did not come in. The 13th Section was introduced and passed simply for the purpose, as he had said, of allowing the landlord and tenant, in cases where a mutual agreement might be arrived at, to facilitate a tenant in purchasing under the Land Purchase Act. He might say that the conclusions arrived at in the Report of this Commission—they had not yet got the evidence which would

enable them to see on what basis those conclusions were arrived at—really placed a premium upon dishonesty. The tenant had been evicted—he had been out of his holding for several years—he had been living in an evicted hut upon the scanty means afforded him by hon. Gentlemen opposite—what capital he had had been lost—but now under the finding of the Evicted Tenants Commission that tenant, without one farthing in his pocket, was to be compulsorily reinstated in his holding whether the landlord liked it or not. He could gather no other meaning from the report of the Commission. Was anything proposed to be done for the unfortunate landlords. If the tenant owed him, as of course he must have owed him, arrears at the time of the eviction, was the landlord to be paid all those arrears? [An hon. MEMBER: Everything.] Not at all, only such sum as the Commission chose to give him. The Commission, he ventured to think, contemplated a sum that would fall very far short of the amount of arrears due at the time of the eviction of the tenant. But strange to say there was another debt due to the landlord in these cases to which the Commission absolutely gave the go-bye. Law costs were due to the landlord in every case, and no provision was made, from the beginning to the end of the Report of the Commission, for payment of any portion of these costs. But a proposal was made in the interests of the tenants to allow them to stock the farms; and how was the money for the purpose to be provided? Loans were to be raised upon the rates at the instigation of the Poor Law Guardians to enable the tenants to stock their land. That proposal seemed to him to be very like a proposal he read in a speech delivered by Mr. J. J. O'Kelly at Dysart, County Clare, on 1st November, 1885, In that speech he said—

“A certain section of the landlords were going to try their power against the people. They should be careful. The Poor Law Guardians could put the evicted tenants on the rates, and eat the landlords' property up.”

MR. J. REDMOND (Waterford): Where do you quote from?

MR. W. KENNY: I am quoting from *The Freeman's Journal*.

MR. J. REDMOND: You are reading from a book. That is not *The Freeman's Journal*.

MR. W. KENNY: It is copied from *The Freeman's Journal*.

MR. J. REDMOND: And garbled.

MR. W. KENNY said that if it was garbled the hon. Member would be able to correct it by comparing it with *The Freeman's Journal*. But what else was to be done for the evicted tenant? He was to get a longer period for the payment of his instalments than was extended to the ordinary tenant in possession who purchased his holding. These tenants, in the majority of cases, were dishonest tenants? In some cases, he granted, they were not originally dishonest, but were forced into dishonesty by those who should have known better. Why were they to get better terms than the ordinary tenant, who came in and purchased his holding under the Acts of 1885 and 1887? But the Report did not stop there. According to it, the payment of the first instalment was to be extended over a longer period than that allowed to the ordinary tenant. They said that this Report was a worthless document because of the procedure which had taken place, and because of the conclusions at which the Commission had arrived. As to the composition of the Commission, as that had been dealt with, he should not trouble the Committee with many observations. Mr. Roche was an upholder of the policy of the Government—in other words, he was a Home Ruler of some years' standing, and the best test as to the truth of that statement was his election as a director of *The Freeman's Journal*, which was one of the exponents of national feelings in Dublin. With reference to Mr. Roche, he had nothing more to say, except that he went on the Commission imbued with political notions that were not in harmony with those of the landlords. Then with regard to Mr. Reddington. A speech, made by Mr. Reddington when the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary visited Dublin some years ago, had been referred to, and, therefore, he should not repeat it; but he might say that speech showed that, as far back as 1888, Mr. Reddington was not in sympathy with the landlords in Ireland, and not only was he not in sympathy, but his sympathies were

directly against the Irish landlord. When the right hon. Gentleman found a seat on the Commission for Mr. Reddington, he must have carried his mind back to that speech of 1888, and known perfectly well what Mr. Reddington's opinions on the land question were. It had been said that Mr. Reddington had disposed of all his land; he would not enter upon any controversy as to that, but they knew pretty well that Mr. Reddington had disposed, to a very large extent, of his landed property. The right hon. Gentleman shook his head. He would accept that, and he might say he believed Mr. Reddington had retained some property in Louth. [An hon. MEMBER: No; in Wexford, as trustee.] He could say this: that during the sittings of the Evicted Tenants Commission he had seen in the Daily Law Lists notices in connection with the sale of Mr. Reddington's estate. Then as to Mr. O'Brien; everyone in Ireland knew that though he was a very able and upright gentleman, still he was a partisan, and it was known to everyone in Dublin who had any connection with the Land Commission that Mr. O'Brien had very strong opinions upon the subject of Irish land. The next gentleman was Mr. Murphy, who was the only member of the Commission who could be suggested as having anything in the nature of landlord sympathies. Mr. Murphy was the Chief Receiver in the Land Judges Court, and had been a land agent for many years in the North of Ireland; but Mr. Murphy felt so strongly as to the conduct of the President of the Commission on the opening day that he could not, as an honourable and impartial gentleman, continue a member of the Commission, and, accordingly, on the third day he resigned his position. He (Mr. Kenny) was rather a young Member of the House, and unacquainted with the forms in which Reports were drawn up; but he certainly should have expected that the Commission, in referring to the withdrawal of Mr. Murphy, would have stated why he withdrew. There was nothing in the Report to show why Mr. Murphy withdrew. But why did not the Report set out the correspondence between Mr. Murphy and Sir James Mathew? Perhaps it would appear in the Appendix to the Report to be published later

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on, though he presumed that volume would only contain the evidence given before the Commission. It would have been most important for the purpose of enabling the House to judge of the impartiality of the proceedings of the Commission, and particularly on the opening day, to have seen what was the conclusion formed in Mr. Murphy's mind of the partiality or impartiality of Sir James Mathew. He deprecated as strongly as any lawyer in the House any attack being made upon the conduct of persons who were in the position of a Judge. Sir James Mathew was not attacked by them in this House in his judicial position. Any criticism they had to offer on his conduct was simply as the President of the Evicted Tenants Commission. He was surprised to hear the right hon. Gentleman, who must have read the proceedings of the opening day of the Commission—who must have read Sir James Mathew's extraordinary remarks on Lord Clanricarde—and who knew of his refusal to permit his hon. and learned Friend the Member for the University of Dublin (Mr. Carson) to cross-examine the witnesses, he was surprised to hear him say that these proceedings were conducted with impartiality. He had an opportunity, with his hon. and learned Friend, of listening to Sir James Mathew on that day, and he should say nothing about his manner or his tone, though when the evidence was laid on the Table of the House some attention might be called to it. It was not Sir James Mathew's manner to them, but his refusal at the close of the day to admit any cross-examination of the witnesses before him that compelled his hon. and learned Friend and himself to regard the whole proceedings as a sham and a farce, and to leave the Court. Sir James Mathew, in some recent observations, had shown what was the leaning of his mind when he became a member of the Commission, and what he himself regarded as the object of the proceedings of that Commission. Sir James Mathew was entertained, either on Christmas Day or the 1st January last, at a banquet—not at the National Liberal Club—but at the Mansion House in Dublin, by the Nationalist Lord Mayor. He said, in responding to the toast of his health—

"I am very fond of England too, and I do not despair of the good time coming, when the two countries will be in harmony together."

In Ireland they all understood what was the meaning of "the good time coming." That "good time" had been looked forward to by Nationalists for a number of years. The "good time coming" was a well-known phrase in Ireland. He came over to Ireland—according to himself—for the purpose of restoring harmony between landlords and tenants and other sections of the community in Ireland, and what was his opinion of the proceedings of the Evicted Tenants' Commission? He said—

"I have tried to do something in that direction with the most unfortunate results."

He did not know whether the Chief Secretary took the same view, but the House had now the epitaph of the Commission, written by Sir James Mathew himself, when he said his efforts to restore harmony in Ireland were attended with the most unfortunate results. With reference to the right of cross-examination, he agreed very much with what the Leader of the Opposition said in his speech on the Address, that he did not regard as supremely important the admission or denial of the right to counsel to cross-examine at that Commission, provided the Commission was so constituted as to ensure in the persons of some of its own members—even one—something in the nature of investigation or cross-examination, or inquiry into the antecedents and *personnel* of the witnesses who were brought before that Commission. If the landlords of Ireland had been assured that there was some member upon that Commission who would have conducted that investigation fairly and impartially, they would have been satisfied even though counsel were not allowed to be heard. What did the Report state with reference to counsel? It said that those interested would be permitted to put, through members of the Commission, any questions that might appear to be relevant. It went on:—

"We reserved to ourselves the right, should the occasion arise, to permit the attendance of counsel for the purpose of cross-examination."

Was there ever such a farce as the system of cross-examination proposed by Sir James Mathew. In the case of the Member for East Galway (Mr. Roche), he was examined out of his direct

examination at the Parnell Commission, and at the close of that examination he was told he might retire. The Member for the University of Dublin (Mr. Carson) at once pointed out that before luncheon-time counsel had been promised cross-examination, but evidently the idea in the mind of Sir James Mathew was that perhaps in a fortnight or a month thence Mr. Roche might be asked to come back to the Commission if he was willing to do so, and then counsel might be allowed to put a few questions by way of cross-examination—not directly to the witness, which was the usual way cross-examination was conducted—but through the mouths of the Commission. Would cross-examination of that sort have been worth anything? He would just like to show how the absence of cross-examination prevented the truth being extracted. Two men named Cook and Bellew from the Massereene estate, were examined; they gave their evidence in an off-hand way, and were allowed to go home without anything in the nature of cross-examination being addressed to them. A witness named Mr. Athol Dudgeon, almost the only witness who presented himself to give evidence on behalf of the landlords, subsequently pointed out that these two men had been convicted at the Manchester Assizes of conspiracy to prevent the sale of boycotted cattle in England, and Sir James Mathew said, "I wish we had known that when they were here." The House would see that unless some information were given to the Commission they were utterly and entirely in the dark as to the antecedents of the persons with whom they were dealing. Here was another instance: A Mr. Michael Stack, of Youghal, formerly a tenant on the Ponsonby estate, was examined before the Commission. He stated that he had been tried for resisting the Sheriff, and convicted and sentenced to three months' imprisonment. That conviction, he added, was confirmed, but the Judge who had confirmed it said—

"He had to confirm it owing to the cursed law that was brought into the country."

The Judge who was alleged to have used this expression—Judge Hamilton, the Recorder of Cork—was dead at the time this evidence was given; but Mr. Tristram Curry, the Registrar of the

Court, who was in attendance at the hearing of the case, emphatically denied that the learned Judge had ever used any such expression, and Mr. Curry was corroborated in this denial by the Sub-Sheriff and District Inspector of Youghal, both of whom were present at the trial. Mr. Curry addressed a letter to the Commission on the subject, but the only satisfaction he got was an intimation that a note would be appended to Mr. Stack's evidence when it appeared. In conclusion, he (Mr. Kenny) could only say that he thought no fitter language could be used to describe the original design, the procedure and the conclusions of the Commission, than to characterise them as a farce and a sham.

\*Mr. CLANCY (Dublin Co., N.) said, the hon. and learned Gentleman who had just sat down used some strong expressions in the course of his speech. He had described the Report of the Commission as indecent. He thought it would have been more decent on the part of the hon. Member if he had observed a Rule laid down there a short time ago to the effect that any person professionally engaged in a case outside should not interfere in any Debate which might arise on that particular question in that House.

MR. W. KENNY (*interposing*) desired to know from the Chairman if he had in any way violated any Rule of the House?

\*THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. and learned Gentleman having appealed to me, I cannot say that he was out of Order.

MR. CLANCY did not say the hon. and learned Member was out of Order. For instance, the hon. and learned Member for Derry (Mr. Ross) a couple of weeks ago, if he had proceeded with his speech on the question of the Donegal prisoners, would have been perfectly in Order, but he would have violated a rule of good taste just as the hon. and learned Gentleman had violated that Rule that night. The fact was, the hon. and learned Member (Mr. Kenny) received a fee for appearing before Mr. Justice Mathew as counsel for some landlord, and he supposed he had now delivered in that House the speech he was not allowed to deliver at the Commission. He was sorry the hon. and learned Gentleman was not allowed to deliver the speech before the Commission, as the House would

then possibly have been spared the repetition of it that night. The hon. and learned Gentleman had described the Report as a sop to the Plan of Campaign. But if these proposals were adopted by the Government, the Government would not be the first British Government that had given a sop to the Plan of Campaign. He remembered two or three sops being given to the Plan of Campaign by the late Government. Within three months of the initiation of the Plan of Campaign the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Bristol (Sir M. Hicks-Beach) actually went to Ireland, and by various devices attempted to put what was called "pressure within the law" on the landlords to put an end to the Plan of Campaign; and afterwards, when that little device did not succeed, the Government brought in the Act of 1887, which embodied in substance the demands of the authors of the Plan of Campaign. The Bill of 1887 not only amended in a most important respect the Land Act of 1881, but it actually went beyond the Land Act of 1881, because it revised the judicial rents, so that if the present Government were charged with offering a sop to the Plan of Campaign they would only be following in the footsteps of their predecessors; and if they only followed them in this respect, they would be entitled to the gratitude of Ireland. The hon. and learned Gentleman, after stating he would not deal with the *personnel* of the Commission, proceeded to expend considerable time in dealing with that very branch of the subject. He (Mr. Clancy) wished to say only one word on that subject. He desired to give an emphatic contradiction to the statement that Mr. Redington had sold his land or was simply a trustee—as the late Solicitor General for Ireland had remarked in a somewhat disorderly manner across the Table—for land in County Wexford. Mr. Redington was the landlord himself. The last speaker had referred to the denial of the right to cross-examine by Mr. Justice Mathew. For himself, he highly approved of the action of Mr. Justice Mathew and the stand he made on that question. The hon. and learned Gentleman had described the Report and the proceedings of the Commission as a sham and a farce. Imagine what a sham and a farce it would have been if the President had allowed the hon. and

learned Gentleman and the late Solicitor General to cross-examine every tenant who came up! The Commission would have been proceeding for a couple of years; the two gentlemen would have been pocketing their 10 or 20 guineas a day, and it was quite possible the proceedings of the Commission would have been going on practically until the end of this Parliament. Whatever else might be said of Mr. Justice Mathew, he considered he did the proper thing when he put his foot down and plainly told the two hon. and learned Gentlemen that that was not a Court of Law. He did not intend to enter at length into the questions now before the House, and certainly he did not intend to reply to the string of disquisitions the last speaker had presented to the House. He desired to say for himself, and for those with whom he had the honour to act, that as regarded the main proposal in the Report of the Commission, they entirely and heartily concurred in it, and the reason was that that proposal was practically the proposal they made last year to the House of Commons.

MR. J. CHAMBERLAIN: Hear, hear!

MR. CLANCY: The right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham seemed to think there was something in that, but he was going to say something more on that subject in which the right hon. Gentleman might possibly think there was also something. That proposal, then, was the same substantially as the proposal of Mr. O'Kelly's Bill. Mr. O'Kelly proposed, in the case of evicted tenants and their landlords, that the evicted tenant should be entitled to apply to buy his holding at a price to be determined in the last resort by the Land Commission, and that the subsequent proceedings in the case of a sale should be carried out as all other transactions under the Land Purchase Act were determined; and they said if the landlords did not like the sale for any reason, that then the tenant should be allowed to go in and have a fair rent fixed under the Act of 1881. The only doubt on his mind, when he heard of this Report, was whether this proposal embraced all classes of tenants in Ireland, who were evicted since 1879, as they (the Irish Members) proposed to include them, or whether it applied only to the Plan of Campaign

tenants. He was glad to find, from his reading of the Report, that it applied to every evicted tenant in Ireland, without exception from 1879 to the recent evictions under the Plan of Campaign. He did not mean to refer to tenants who were evicted because of their own fault, or from causes over which they had control; but to the Land League tenants evicted from 1879 onwards, and the Plan of Campaign tenants also. He, for one, was glad that no distinction was drawn between these two classes of tenants, and if any had been he and his colleagues should certainly have made it a cause of a complaint in that Debate. He had said that the main proposal in the Commons Report was the proposal of Mr. O'Kelly's Bill, and he invited the right hon. Member for West Birmingham to listen to what he was about to say. This main proposal of Mr. O'Kelly's Bill was no new proposal. That proposal had actually found expression in the Statute Book of the realm. Mr. O'Kelly's Bill of last year was founded upon an Act passed by the late Government—namely, the Redemption of Rent Act, 1891. That Act was passed for the purpose, amongst others, of allowing grantees of fee-farm grants to redeem their holdings. He ventured to say that twenty, or ten, or even five years ago, a proposal such as the Redemption of Rent Bill, 1891, which was brought in and passed by the late Government, would have been denounced as the most open confiscation and robbery by the landlord party in that House. What was the proposal? It was that landlords—for they were practically landlords—who had got leases for ever, who had got fee-farm grants—persons who were supposed to be able to make their own bargains, and who were in a superior position in life—if they chose, rightly or wrongly, to say their rents had become too high should be allowed to go in and say to their landlords, "You must either allow me to buy my holding at a price to be determined by the Land Commission, or else you must allow me to go into Court and have a fair rent fixed by an impartial tribunal entirely indifferent to both of us." A more revolutionary proposal in the true sense was never made to that House, and yet that Bill was passed by the late Government. And why? Be-



cause they found it expedient in the cause of social order in Ireland and to cure a social disease to pass that Bill into law. The very same argument that applied to the Bill which was passed for the benefit of the long leaseholders and fee-farm grantees of Ireland would apply with tenfold force to passing one for the evicted tenants of Ireland. No disturbance, disorder, or crime arose out of the condition of the long leaseholders who were a comparatively small body in Ireland, and there were no overwhelming reasons of State for including them within a revolutionary measure of this description. It had been said that the Plan of Campaign was attended by outrage and crime. He did not admit anything of the kind, but manifestly it had been attended by very considerable disorder; and, therefore, he said the reasons would apply to granting the benefits of this legislation to the victims of the land war waged from 1886 up to a couple of years ago ten times more reasonably than to conceding it to the long leaseholders or fee-farm grantees of Ireland. This proposal had been described as robbery. Who was robbed? The landlord got the full value of his property. It was said he would have to consent to the retention of one-fifth of the purchase money; but every landlord in Ireland had to submit to the same condition, in any case in which the Land Commission thought there ought to be a guarantee deposit. If the landlord was not robbed, was the planter robbed? No. As one who took part in the framing of Mr. O'Kelly's Bill last year, he desired to say that they desired to do no injustice whatever to any planter who had acquired a *bonâ fide* or substantial interest in his holding. There was no provision in the Bill for giving him compensation out of public funds for the reason that no private Member of the House could introduce a Money Bill or a Money Clause in a Bill. But they were quite prepared to put into it a provision to provide for proper and fair compensation of any planter who had acquired a *bonâ fide* or substantial interest in his holding, and which it would be iniquitous to deprive him of without compensation. With regard to the planters, he was of opinion that it would be a very good bargain to pay what was just and right to settle those

estates in Ireland. He, for one, hoped that the Government would soon embody these provisions in a Bill which they would have an opportunity of discussing in that House. He did not bind himself to every proposal contained in the Report of the Commission; but the main proposal as to the principle of Mr. O'Kelly's Bill of last year was one that he hoped to see embodied in the Bill when it was brought forward. The Government must not be deterred by any threats uttered in that House. They were told that if such a Bill were introduced it would be opposed at every stage; but they had heard those threats before, and had known them to be defeated. If the Government intimated that they intended this Bill to become law the news would be welcome in Ireland. The evicted tenants had waited for eight or nine months for this Report. He hoped they would not have to wait nine or ten months longer, but that the Government would embody in a Bill the main principle recommended in the Report—that for the reinstatement of the tenants. It was a principle which was just, and which had found application already, and there was no excuse for delaying its extension, so that contentment might be brought about among the great body of the tenants in Ireland.

Mr. J. CHAMBERLAIN (Birmingham, W.): Sir, I hope the hon. Member for North Dublin did not misunderstand the cheer which I interjected in the earlier portion of his remarks. It was not intended at all as an ironical cheer, but merely in approval and in confirmation of the statement which he made that the recommendations of the Commission did embody the principle of Mr. O'Kelly's Bill, and I think in these circumstances the hon. Member and his friends are perfectly consistent in approving of the Report of the Government and in pressing upon the Government to give immediate application to it. I shall not detain the Committee for many minutes. I have risen to call attention to a point to which, I think, no reference has hitherto been made. I feel that all questions that arise out of the conduct of the Commission and out of the recommendations which the Commission has made, are more properly dealt with by Irish Members like my hon. Friend beside me, who are thoroughly acquainted with all the facts

*Mr. Clancy*

and who are much more competent to deal with them than English Members, who have not information so special in regard to the subject. But there is one point raised by the appointment of this Commission which, I think the Committee will see, is a matter of general interest on which all of us are quite entitled to express an opinion. The question which arises out of the appointment of this Commission is, what are the circumstances under which it is desirable, I will even say under which it is allowable, to take a Judge of the High Court in this country from his ordinary duties in order to preside at the inquiry? I think everybody will admit that any proceeding of that kind is attended with great inconvenience. We know perfectly well that the Courts are overdone with work, and we have had again and again in this House claims for the appointment of new Judges on account of the arrears, and clearly the legal staff ought not to be diminished, and this inconvenience ought not to be increased except under circumstances which almost amount to an emergency and which would justify an exceptional proceeding. But, besides the question of convenience, there is another objection to the employment of the Judges, which is, I think it will be admitted, of still greater importance. Every Member of this House desires that the impartiality of the Judicial Bench should be as far as possible absolutely preserved, and with that object it is also desirable that they should not be mixed up more than is necessary with political questions. Do not let it be supposed that I am prepared to carry that to any absurd or exaggerated extent. It is perfectly clear there are many cases in which crimes are connected with political agitation. There are other cases in which civil suits may arise out of political questions. Nobody pretends that Judges of the land are not to deal with cases which come before them in the ordinary course of their work because there is some political connection. But it is quite a different thing to say that Judges should be taken out of their ordinary work in order to deal with purely political questions. And I would venture to suggest that the ruling principle which ought to be observed in these cases is that, if it be permissible to take Judges away at all in order to deal with

these inquiries, it can only be in a case when the subject of the inquiry is in the nature of a criminal investigation, or when it is in the nature of a civil suit, and I do not believe there can be other cases in which it is justifiable to take from his Court a Judge of the land in order to deal with an investigation. We have had, in very recent years, two cases in which this matter has been discussed in the House of Commons, and I think they would give us a guide for our future conduct in the matter. The first case to which I shall refer is that of the Parnell Commission, when three Judges of the High Court were taken from their duties. I do not think it will be denied that that investigation was in the nature of a criminal inquiry—an inquiry into a criminal case. The allegations which were made almost amounted to a charge of criminal conduct. It may be doubtful whether, even if the allegations had been true, they could have been proved in an ordinary prosecution in a Court of Justice, but they were subjects which were well worthy of inquiry, and, as a matter of fact, the persons who were so charged themselves demanded an inquiry, and, accordingly, the Judges were considered by the then Government to be the best persons to conduct the inquiry. There was some dispute as to whether the inquiry ought to have been conducted by Judges of the land; but there was no dispute as to the fact that, if it were considered undesirable that the inquiry should be conducted by a Committee of this House, then the only alternative was that it should be conducted by a judicial tribunal. My right hon. Friend the Prime Minister said, when dealing with the Second Reading of the Charges and Allegations Bill—

“As far as I am concerned, I think that an inquiry under thoroughly competent and impartial Judges is a method of proceeding which, after the right and true method of proceeding has been refused, is better than none.”

I am not dealing now with the question whether a Committee of this House would be a better method of proceeding, but I quote my right hon. Friend to show that in his opinion that was a case in which the Judges of the land might very properly be employed. Even then a question arose as to the method in which an inquiry justifiably conducted by Judges ought to be conducted by them.

That also has a bearing upon the point I wish to bring before the Committee. It was maintained by the then Opposition that the inquiry ought to be conducted on judicial methods, and on that I should like to quote the opinion of my right hon. Friend the Member for Derby, who I am sorry to see is not in his place. He said on the same occasion—

"Is this inquiry to be a judicial inquiry conducted upon judicial principles? I venture to say that that is a matter of supreme importance, because an inquiry conducted by Judges not upon judicial principles, not upon judicial lines, is not a judicial inquiry at all; and if the Judges conduct an inquiry of that kind they are no better than anybody else, and perhaps a good deal worse."

And then, in a later portion of the same speech, he said—

"If they," meaning the then Government, "come forward now and tell us that this is to be a judicial proceeding, conducted according to judicial principles, of course one of the gravest objections to the form of inquiry will be removed; but if that is not done, then the Government are seeking to hookwink the mind of the public and to induce them to believe that this is a judicial inquiry, because you put Judges upon it, while at the same time they are depriving it of the essential qualities that belong to a judicial inquiry."

I entirely agree with both my right hon. Friends, and I think I have established on their authority that if Judges are to be removed from their ordinary occupation it should only be in a case of that kind; and two conditions are necessary to the proper conduct of their inquiry: first, that the tribunal should be strictly impartial; and, secondly, that the inquiry should be conducted on judicial principles. That is the light thrown upon this matter to-night by the Debate in reference to the Paruall Commission. But the same question arose upon another matter—namely, the Local Government Bill for Ireland proposed by the late Government in 1892, on the clause which was popularly known as the "Put 'em in the dock" clause. That clause, it will be remembered, provided that when a County Council under the new Bill had been guilty of oppression, malversation, or gross corruption, they might be brought before the Courts in Ireland, and if the Courts decided they had committed the offence with which they were charged, they might be subject to deprivation of office. That is not exactly one of the two cases in which I have said Judges might be taken from their ordinary work,

because neither is it in the nature of a criminal investigation, nor can it be called a civil suit; but it is a case in which the Judges would have been taken from their ordinary work. The law would have laid it down that it was an offence for the County Council to be guilty of oppression, malversation, or gross corruption; and it appears to me that in that case there was no other tribunal to which you could possibly have gone fairly and properly to have the case tried. It was merely a proposal that, the law having defined the character of the offence, the Judges should be called upon in the ordinary course of their judicial occupation to declare whether the offence had been committed. Now, in the course of that Debate, a very important statement was made by another right hon. Gentleman—who is not present to-night—the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Duchy. In dealing with this particular clause he said, referring to the Judges—

"There is no body of persons in Ireland whose position it is more desirable to safeguard and to remove from suspicion of political partisanship than the Irish Judges."

Of course he was speaking about Ireland, but I presume he would say the same thing about the English Judges also. The right hon. Gentleman went on to say, after referring to the case of Chief Justice May, who retired from certain trials in 1880 after he had expressed opinions regarding the traversers—the right hon. Gentleman said—

"However much Judges may desire to avoid imputations of this kind, it is one to which they are often exposed, and, therefore, the Government ought to take every means of removing them from suspicion. Can anyone imagine a cause more likely to renew that suspicion, and to aggravate the mistrust felt towards the administrators of the law than their introduction into political cases of this kind?"

Now I come to the point to which I wish to call the special attention of the House. We have now got another Commission appointed by the Government in which these right hon. Gentlemen, whose language I have quoted, are sitting in prominent places, and again a Judge is taken from his ordinary work, at great inconvenience to the English Courts, to preside over that inquiry. What is the nature of that inquiry? Does it come within the principles I have ventured to lay down?

*Mr. J. Chamberlain*

Does it come within the principles those right hon. Gentlemen have previously laid down? Is it in the nature of a criminal investigation? No, because we are told it was not intended to try the landlords. It was certainly not intended to try the tenants, and, therefore, I assume that the Government do not consider that this Commission was appointed to conduct anything in the nature of a criminal investigation. Well, Sir, was it in the nature of a civil suit? Certainly not. No cause of action was brought before this Commission, and in the present case I do not think it will be contradicted that the object of the Government was to find a political remedy for the result of a political agitation. The inquiry which was submitted to the learned Judge was an inquiry full of the most contentious political matter, and not only did it deal with politics in this way, but every condition necessary for a fair inquiry was ignored. The Prime Minister, in his description of the cases in which, in his opinion, such an inquiry might be undertaken by the Judges, claimed that it should be undertaken by competent and impartial men. Now, I do not call in question the competency of this tribunal, but I do not think that anyone who has considered the circumstances of the case will for a moment pretend that the Commissioners either were impartial or were intended by the Chief Secretary to be impartial. They were appointed to carry out a foregone conclusion. Then the second condition is that when the members of a tribunal of this kind are appointed they shall proceed by judicial methods, and that the inquiry shall have all the attributes of a judicial inquiry. Has that been the case here? Was there ever before in this world a judicial inquiry in which the Judge pronounced the verdict before he had heard the evidence? Was there ever before a judicial inquiry in which, by the action of the Judge, the defendants were precluded from offering evidence in support of their case? I think we ought seriously to consider whether this practice of importing Judges, whether English or Irish, into Commissions ought to be continued, and, if it is to be continued, upon what principles it is to be continued. I very much regret that two right hon. Friends of mine, whose opinions I have

quoted, are not present here to-night. I should have liked to have asked the Chancellor of the Duchy to give us another of those constitutional lectures to which we listen with so much attention, pleasure, and profit, and to hear whether, in his opinion, this is one of those cases which are so removed from political considerations that Judges may fairly be introduced into them without risking their reputation for judicial impartiality. I should also have liked to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether this inquiry does not come within his description of the cases in which a Judge has been appointed to the head of a Commission in order to hoodwink the public. [*Cries of "Order!"*] I am quoting the right hon. Gentleman's own words, and I repeat it, in order to hoodwink the public into forming the idea that there is a judicial inquiry, although every judicial principle and method is absolutely disregarded.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Sir C. RUSSELL, Hackney, S.): I do not think that this Amendment was moved by the hon. Member for South Tyrone in order to enable us to discuss in an academic way whether or not the employment of Judges upon Commissions is a desirable thing. But I do not hesitate, for my own part, to say that I think the employment of Judges in that manner can seldom be resorted to wisely. We are not here, however, to discuss that aspect of the question. My right hon. Friend who has just spoken has laid down certain formulae to his own satisfaction. He says that whenever a Judge is chosen to assist in any of these Commissions the proceedings ought to be conducted in accordance with, and upon entirely judicial principles. I have only to say, in answer to that, that no one who considers the nature of this Commission—and its composition of four or five gentleman—can regard that inquiry as a judicial inquiry, or believe that it was intended to be a judicial inquiry. A judicial inquiry involves an authority to decide; there was no authority in this inquiry to decide. A judicial inquiry, in the sense the phrase is used, involves the trial of issues affecting rights; this Commission had no authority to decide as to any right, whether of tenant or of landlord. It was appointed—and this was its sole function—to collect information

upon which the judgment of this House might be pronounced—to collect information upon which, if the Government should think proper to submit proposals to the House, the judgment of the House might be formed. The right hon. Gentleman appears to think that the presence of Sir James Mathew was a most objectionable feature of the Commission. We have heard what the Mover of this Amendment had to say on that subject. And what did the Member for South Tyrone say? Why he told us that it was a fact that an English Judge had been appointed President of the Commission that gave him and his friends confidence that the inquiry would be wisely, properly, and honestly carried out.

\*MR. T. W. RUSSELL: That was before we saw the character of the Commission.

SIR C. RUSSELL: We know when the change began to operate in the mind of the hon. Member. I am referring him to his opinion on this appointment, and I am referring the right hon. Gentleman to what was said of Judge Mathew's appointment—an appointment which he considered was so objectionable.

MR. J. CHAMBERLAIN: I wish to say, Sir, that I did not refer to Sir James Mathew personally. I repeat that, and hope it will be perfectly clear to the right hon. Gentleman and to the House.

MR. MACARTNEY: I rise to a point of Order. I desire to call attention to the constant disorderly interruption by the hon. Member for Mid-Cork (Dr. Tanner), who is continually using personalities. I would call your attention, Sir, to the fact that when the right hon. Gentleman was addressing you he called out, in my hearing, and that of other hon. Members, "A Brummagem apology"! I also ask whether the hon. Member is in Order in applying to hon. Members the appellation of "rats"?

DR. TANNER: I beg to say, Mr. Mellor, that I never called the hon. Gentleman a "rat."

\*THE CHAIRMAN: All interruptions are disorderly; it is most essential that hon. Members should abstain from interruptions, so that the Committee may consider the matters brought before it.

MR. J. CHAMBERLAIN [*Cries of "Order!" and "Chair!"*]: I only wish

to say that I think my hon. and learned Friend misunderstood me. I was arguing against the employment of a Judge in a case which was neither in the nature of a criminal investigation nor in the nature of a civil suit. I was not arguing against Mr. Justice Mathew in particular.

SIR C. RUSSELL: I was pointing out that while the right hon. Gentleman was complaining of the presence of a Judge on the Commission, it was the fact of the presence of a Judge on it that, in the first instance, gave the hon. Member for South Tyrone and his friends confidence in the Commission. If the Government made a mistake in securing the services of a judge in the person of Mr. Justice Mathew, they only followed the mistakes—if mistakes they were—of other Governments. Mr. Justice Day was appointed to inquire into certain riots, and it will be remembered that in that inquiry Mr. Justice Day declined to allow cross-examination.

MR. J. CHAMBERLAIN: That was in the nature of a criminal investigation.

SIR C. RUSSELL: No, that was not in the nature of a criminal investigation—the right hon. Gentleman will forgive me for saying so—because it did not involve bringing home crime to anyone, and if it were the case is still stronger, for no cross-examination was allowed. A much more important case for which the Government, represented by the Party opposite, was responsible, was the appointment of Sir James Fitzjames Stephen as a member and President of an Ordnance Commission. I could point to other cases in which eminent Judges have been members of Commissions which were not of a legal character, and did not come within the lines suggested. Amongst others there was Mr. Justice Patteson, who was appointed to a City Commission. But I thought the sting, if not the object, of the right hon. Gentleman's speech lay in the tail of it. Now, was it worthy of the right hon. Gentleman to fling at my right hon. Friend that taunt—that accusation that he appointed this Commission merely to endorse a foregone conclusion? Hon. and right hon. Gentlemen may differ from my right hon. Friend, but no one in this House or out of it can have doubts as to his perfect candour and honour. He has told this House that in one respect, and in one respect only, was it a foregone

*Sir C. Russell*

conclusion, and it was so in a sense in which all parties in the House were agreed, judging by their statements both here and throughout the country — namely, that the case of the evicted tenants was a source of danger to the public peace, and that all parties desired to see whether some just and equitable method of dealing with the matter could not be adopted. In no other sense had my right hon. Friend a foregone conclusion. I pass from the speech of the right hon. Gentleman to that of the hon. and learned Gentleman the Member for St. Stephen's Green (Mr. W. Kenny). It has always been a matter of great pain to me to find myself in collision with any hon. Member especially of my own profession, and I must say that I much regret that the two hon. and learned Members, both distinguished members of the Irish Bar, who took part as counsel in the inquiry before the Commission—the hon. and learned Member for the St. Stephen's Green Division and the hon. and learned Member who drew attention to this matter in the Debate on the Address in reply to the Queen's Speech—should have felt it their duty to bring this matter before the House. I do not pretend to set myself up as a judge to decide these points, but, at all events, the fact that these two hon. and learned Gentlemen were not only engaged before the Commission, but came into collision with Mr. Justice Mathew—the President having occasion, I do not say rightly or wrongly, to animadvert very strongly upon their conduct on that occasion—does not afford in the case of either of them a guarantee of their dealing with the matter with dispassionateness. I must say, knowing the reputation of the hon. and learned Gentleman the Member for the St. Stephen's Green Division as a lawyer of distinction, I was greatly surprised at the statement he made as to the Report of the Commission. He stated broadly that the main recommendation of the Report was the compulsory reinstatement of the evicted tenants against the wish of the landlords.

**MR. JAMES LOWTHER:** Hear, hear!

**SIR C. RUSSELL:** I see the right hon. Gentleman opposite seems to

endorse that view. But the recommendation was this:—

"Where the evicted holding is in the power or under the control of the landlord, the former tenant shall be enabled to petition the Commission for reinstatement as tenant, setting forth in his Petition the terms as to rent, or otherwise, upon which he is prepared to accept reinstatement."

But the tenant who so makes application is subject to the next recommendation, which is this—that

"The owner shall have the option of requiring that the lands shall be purchased by the tenants under the Land Purchase Acts, on terms to be fixed by the Commission."

It also goes on to say—

"A tenant refusing to purchase shall have no claim to be reinstated."

**MR. JAMES LOWTHER:** I adhere to my opinion.

**SIR C. RUSSELL:** The right hon. Gentleman says he adheres to his opinion. I have known him adhere for many years to opinions that have not been endorsed by public opinion. But the hon. and learned Member for the St. Stephen's Green Division made another extraordinary statement. Feeling the force of the arguments of the Chief Secretary as to the expressions of opinion which had proceeded from hon. and right hon. Members opposite as to the necessity for dealing with this question of evicted tenants the hon. and learned Member proceeded to say that these were merely pious opinions expressed by those hon. and right hon. Members. He said that all they meant was that they hoped sincerely that the tenants and landlords should come together, and by mutual agreement arrive at a settlement with a view to reinstatement. Well, the hon. and learned Gentleman is entirely mistaken in the matter; and though I do not intend to dwell on this, it is so important as justifying the policy of the Government in proposing this Commission that I must trouble the House for a moment upon it. It is important that the House should understand how these statements—some of which have been cited by my right hon. Friend—were addressed to the House at all. They were addressed on the occasion of the discussion which preceded the passing of the Act of 1891. They were not merely in relation to Clause 13, proposed by the hon. Member for South Tyrone. There was a sug-

gestion made by the hon. Member for Kerry of a provision which, if carried, would have had the effect of pledging Parliament to the reinstatement of all tenants evicted since 1879, whether the places of those tenants had or had not been occupied by planters or fresh tenants. The significance, therefore, of the observations of the Leader of the Opposition, and of other hon. Gentlemen, who expressed opinions in the same sense, is that they were dissociating themselves from that wide proposition, but were expressing an opinion in favour of the reinstatement of tenants where they could be replaced. In addition to the quotations that have already been made, I will only cite one passage. I might cite a good many. On page 1635 of *Hansard*, in a Report of the 4th June, 1891, the hon. Member for South Tyrone, referring to the proposal made, used these words :—

"It is quite true that a great many evicted farms are still untenanted. But so far as the tenanted holdings are concerned, there would be enormous difficulty in bringing them under the operation of this clause. I do not see how, at this time of the Session, and in view of the possibilities in another place, it will be possible to touch the question of tenanted land. This clause deals with evicted farms in the hands of landlords, or derelict, or held by caretakers; and I say that that is going a considerable distance in the direction hon. Members wish to go. I believe it would settle three-fourths of the Campaign estates."

I might cite expressions of opinion from the hon. and gallant Member for County Down in the same direction; but there is, in fact, hardly an hon. Member who has taken any interest in this matter who has not expressed an opinion in the same sense. The hon. and learned Member proceeded to make some criticism upon the *personnel* of the Commission. I do not intend to follow him into that matter in any great detail, and he will not think me discourteous for not doing so. He refers to Mr. Roche, to whom he gives a high character, the only blemish in it being that he had shown a larger share of what we may regard as patriotism and clear-sightedness than some of his hon. colleagues on this question, having been a Home Ruler for some years. He criticised Mr. Redington as not being in sympathy with the landlords. Well, I want to know who is in sympathy with the landlords, except the landlords themselves and their dependents? My right

hon. and learned Friend the Member for Bury (Sir H. James) thinks I am not expressing an impartial view. I have always recognised that, as regards a great many of these landlords, they have been the victims of circumstances, not of their own making, but which have been bequeathed to them. But when I have said that, I have said nearly all there is to say in their favour. I do not think that history records the story of a more unpatriotic body of men—speaking of them as a class—than the Irish landlords. Then there is Mr. Morrough O'Brien. I will say of him this: that he had the courage to hold opinions as to Irish Government which, at one time, were unfashionable, but are now widely accepted. The hon. and learned Member for St. Stephen's Green Division cited two illustrations of how wretchedly this Commission had been conducted, and of what might have been the case if permission had been given to cross-examine. Those were hardly happy illustrations. Two witnesses, called Bellow and Cook from the Massareene estate gave evidence before the Commission, which, at a later stage, was contradicted, and, I assume, rightly contradicted. What does that show? That the landlord's agent knew something which he could usefully tell the Commission, and stayed to tell it, and the Commission have duly recorded it. If the other landlords had not, as it seems to me, made the excuse of not being permitted to cross-examine, there was no reason why they should not have brought forward anything that was to be said by them or for them, and why it should not have been recorded for the information of the House. I ask why are we treated to this Debate to-night? It cannot be on account of the cost of the Commission, for probably this is the cheapest Commission ever issued by any Department of the Government; £2,000 is, I think, the cost. We are not here to discuss that item. We are not here to discuss the £50 paid to Mr. O'Callaghan for collecting the evidence, or the item in respect of Mr. Kilbride. Why are we here? I assume it is because hon. and right hon. Gentlemen were determined to give effect to their own prophecies, and to make it impossible that the Second Reading of the Home Rule Bill should be discussed before Easter.

This Motion was put down by the hon. Member for South Tyrone, while it was still a matter of doubt whether the Home Rule Bill would be taken to-day or not. I am not going to trouble the House with many words upon the policy of this Commission. There are two views taken in this House as to the evicted tenants, and especially that class of evicted tenants we call Plan of Campaign tenants. We are all familiar with these two views. On the one hand, the Plan of Campaign is represented as an unholy combination of dishonest men, who were perfectly well able all of them to discharge their obligations, but who have dishonestly combined to defraud their landlords. On the other hand, they are described as a body of men, who have combined together some able and some not able to pay, but the strong standing with the weak, to resist the payment of rents which, as a rule, the tenants could not bear and which are not just. I am not going to say which of these descriptions is true. Probably neither is true. Probably the truth lies between the two. But the Act of 1887 can be pointed to as evidence that the Tory Party and Parliament thought further protective legislation was needed. I am content, however, to take it, as it has been judicially pronounced to be, as an illegal combination; but if an illegal combination—an illegal combination which undoubtedly brought about a state of things which every man who has at heart the peace of Ireland would desire to see removed, and in some reasonable and proper way put an end to. Now, I have dealt with the *personnel* of the Commission and its object. I only want to say one word more about Mr. Justice Mathew, and I hope the House will excuse me if I speak with a little warmth on the subject, because Mr. Justice Mathew is an old personal friend of mine. I will say now what no Judge on the Bench will deny, and what no lawyer in this House, whether sitting on one side or the other, and however he may differ from the wisdom or the unwisdom of the course pursued, will deny—namely, that it was the desire of Mr. Justice Mathew in this, as in every act of his public life, to do full and complete justice. I would like to remind the House of what was said by a Judge on the Bench who has lived a longer judicial

life than any living man, I mean of those who are now sitting on the Bench—I refer to the Master of the Rolls, Lord Esher. He took the view which many hon. Members may entertain, that a Judge ought not to have been appointed to this Commission at all; but what was his language on November 9, 1892, not many months before the hon. and learned Gentleman opposite thought himself justified in making the attack which he did make in the Debate on the Address on that distinguished Judge, Mr. Justice Mathew. Lord Esher said—

“That Judge had been fiercely accused already of partiality, or of a want or desire to do justice. But he could safely say that throughout his close experience of 24 years there had not been a Judge on the English Bench who had shown at any time or in any position any other feeling or desire than to be absolutely impartial and to do right. He was quite ready, therefore, to vouch for the integrity of the particular Judge to whom he referred. He had known him well and long in his ordinary sphere, and he was convinced that he would not now betray his education and training, but would carry into his new work the same desire to do right and to be impartial between party and party which had always marked his career.”

An hon. MEMBER: Lord Esher was ironical.

SIR C. RUSSELL: A right hon. Gentleman opposite says Lord Esher was ironical. Do not slander Lord Esher. I regard that as a gross slander. As certain as I am addressing the House Lord Esher would so regard it himself. He was opposed to the appointment of Mr. Justice Mathew, but he spoke what he believed, and what every man on the Bench knows, that Mr. Justice Mathew was incapable of knowingly doing anything that was partial or unjust. I confess that when I saw the attacks that were made upon Sir James Mathew I was somewhat nervous about the matter; but when I saw the shorthand notes of what the learned Judge said, I found that Mr. Justice Mathew had not only been misrepresented—he had been traduced. Now the point I wish to make clear—and I will make it clear to demonstration—as to the departure of these hon. and learned Gentlemen and the consequent disappearance of any representatives of the landlords from the inquiry, was owing, and owing solely, to the refusal of Sir James Mathew to allow cross-examination. It was attributable to no other cause; and I shall proceed to



justify to the House, and to those who are conversant with legal or *quasi*-legal proceedings, Sir James Mathew's action, and I shall show that in refusing the power of cross-examination he acted rightly. I know that some criticisms have been passed on Sir James Mathew, because he referred in his opening address to the case of Lord Clanricarde. Perhaps it would have been better if he had avoided that reference. So far as I can see, Sir James Mathew made one mistake, the mistake of a generous mind. He honestly thought that Lord Clanricarde did stand alone in this matter, and he did honestly think that the landlord class in Ireland were prepared to avail themselves of just and equitable methods for putting an end to this hateful feud. I think that therein Sir James Mathew was mistaken. Sir James Mathew did not pass judgment on Lord Clanricarde without hearing him. This is the letter which the Secretary to the Commission received from Lord Clanricarde. It is dated 26th October—

"I must decline to accept your invitation that I shall make suggestions to promote an attack by this Commission on my low-let property. I will not by suggestions commit myself to complicity in proceedings so mischievous to the public interest and so inequitable."

This letter was written before the Commission met. I must call attention to the manner in which the Reports of the proceedings of the Commission were garbled. Absolutely some of the papers attacked Sir James Mathew for the following statement:—

"But even at the eleventh hour he may see the wisdom of permitting us to extricate him from a position in which it would seem, great as is his rank, no man need envy him."

The word "rank" was reported "risk," and Sir J. Mathew was made to speak of Lord Clanricarde's risk. The hon. Member for South Tyrone at once accepted the correction when I made it. It is affectation to suppose that Sir J. Mathew had not heard, as everybody in and out of this House has heard, of the doings of Lord Clanricarde. The right hon. Gentleman said he did not make an attack upon Sir James Mathew. Now, I want to show the Committee what the line was that Mr. Justice Mathew did lay down. He laid down clearly the line he was going to pursue. He said that evidence would be given by witnesses on

behalf of each interest, and that, through the Commissioners, questions which were deemed relevant might be put in cross-examination. He further stated that direct cross-examination might be later allowed should the necessity arise. The hon. Member for South Tyrone had said that Sir James Mathew had even threatened the Press. Really, that is carrying partisanship too far. A very reasonable communication had been received from the landlords requesting that one-sided statements should not appear until their answer could be published contemporaneously or about the same time; and, having said what was desirable in connection with that matter, Sir J. Mathew proceeded to say that, while they have resolved that the Commission shall be an open Commission, and its proceedings shall be reported in the Press, yet that he trusts the Press will observe the golden rule of not commenting upon the proceedings during the pendency of those proceedings. And then he adds this—

"If this Rule be infringed we will be compelled, very reluctantly, to exclude reporters, and I may add, in all good humour, that if these gentlemen are once subjected to a process of—what shall I say?—eviction, they must be prepared to leave with little hope of reinstatement."

To treat that as an act of arbitrary authority over the Press is a little too ridiculous. But now I proceed. A witness is called, and during the evidence of that witness the hon. and learned Gentleman opposite made several interruptions. He objected, for instance, to a witness being called in to state what he knew of the course of dealing on the Clanricarde property unless it could be shown that he was personally himself a party to, and aware of the course of the transactions in relation to it. I stop here in order to comment upon this as being the first and clearest illustration that the hon. and learned Gentleman—he will forgive me for saying so—entirely misconceived the character of the Commission.

MR. CARSON: I admit that.

SIR C. RUSSELL: Then the hon. and learned Gentleman ought not to have done so, and would not have done so, if he had made himself acquainted with the constitution of the Commission. Everyone knows that in Commissions of this kind the highly technical rules of legal evidence which are much more

*Sir C. Russell*

complicated in our system than in other systems of jurisprudence are not observed at all. As to cross-examination, I want to know what Commission can be cited which would justify the allegation that Mr. Justice Mathew was not right in refusing cross-examination? I have listened to all that has been said, and I am still of opinion that no Commission in any sense analogous to that Commission can be cited at which cross-examination has been allowed in the sense in which it was claimed by these hon. and learned Gentlemen. Let me suggest what would have happened. Fancy these hon. and learned Gentlemen taking up, say, the case of Mr. Roche! The hon. and learned Gentleman would have got up and cross-examined him about that deer episode, flourishing in his face that summons for trespass which has been described by the hon. and gallant Member for North Armagh as a conviction for stealing a deer.

COLONEL SAUNDERSON: I beg pardon. I read from an attested copy of the conviction.

SIR C. RUSSELL: I think the House will remember the description given by the hon. Member for Galway (Mr. Roche) of the shooting of the deer. There was no enclosed deer forest within miles, and the hon. Member shot the deer on his own land. I think it is only an "excited politician" who would describe that as a grave offence going to the credit of a particular witness. The hon. Member knows that the very next witness called was the Right Rev. Dr. Healy, the coadjutor Bishop of Clonfert. [Mr. CARSON: I was not there.] Well, he might have been there. If it was the object of the landlord party to assist by putting their case before the Commission, the hon. and learned Gentleman ought to have been there to put it. I am quite sure that the hon. and learned Gentleman will not doubt the accuracy of the account which Dr. Healy gave of the transactions on the Clanricarde property, and of the numerous attempts he unsuccessfully made to settle the dispute. I think his account might well be trusted. But what did Sir James Mathew say after the hon. and learned Gentleman had again and again pressed the matter? He reiterated what he had previously said, and ex-

plained it. I must read the passage to the Committee. It is the last I shall read—

"The Commissioners have consulted one another on the point, and they have come to a clear decision as to what they ought to do; and if you, when you take off your wig and gown, will consider the course which we propose to adopt, even you and your clients will see that it is perfectly fair. We propose to hear first the witnesses called on the part of the tenants. We will then most gladly hear the witnesses called on the part of Lord Clanricarde, including, we hope, Lord Clanricarde himself. And when that has taken place we will hear any application on either side to cross-examine. But now you are here as *amicus curiæ*, and in no other capacity."

Upon that, and upon that only, the hon. and learned Gentleman gets up and denounces the whole thing as a farce and a sham, and says "I will not prostitute my position by appearing any further." If I am right—and I want to know whether there is any lawyer in this House who will get up and say that I am wrong—that in a Commission of this character there is no precedent for allowing the cross-examination that was demanded. I ask, Was the refusal to allow cross-examination a real and justifiable ground for retiring from the Commission? Then the learned Judge made a strong observation. I regret that either of these observations were made, because I know that counsel are often placed in trying positions, and sometimes are induced to say things in the heat of the moment which they are afterwards sorry for having said. It is a matter of great regret to me that the hon. and learned Gentleman in expressing himself on this matter the other day did not make a statement of that kind. The Committee must feel that this is a "got-up" Debate. [*Cries of "No!"*] Yes, an unreal Debate. When the Government come, if ever they come, to make any proposals founded wholly or in part on these recommendations, you will have the opportunity of legitimately discussing the character of such proposals. I do not propose to discuss them to-night, because I do not think they are directly relevant to the question before us. I decline to believe that for the sake of raising the question of an expenditure of £2,000—a question of £50 to Kilbride or of £50 to O'Callaghan—the time of the House has been taken up to this extent. The hon. Member for South Tyrone has

made use of the very considerable powers he possesses to vilify Ireland and Irishmen. He is not an Irishman. [A NATIONALIST MEMBER: Thank God!] I would fain believe that he desires to play a patriotic part towards the country which, however, he has adopted. He is playing the part, however, of an "Old Mortality" with a difference. He has been going about with steel chisel and busy mallet deepening the record of the faults and frailties of the country of his adoption, not looking, as I think a man with real patriotism and genuine sympathy would look, to see whether there were not to be found in the history of his country some explanation of the shortcomings of its people, whether, if the faults could not be excused, they might not be at least palliated. I hope the hon. Member, when that better spirit which resides in the heart of every man shall some time or other in a happier moment re-assert itself, will apply the undoubted abilities which he possesses to do something in genuine sympathy with the country of his adoption.

MR. CARSON (Dublin University): Mr. Mellor, if I regarded the hon. Member, the Attorney General, as the proper authority for setting the standard of taste which is to guide counsel in this House, as to when he shall speak and when he shall not speak, I should probably, having regard to his observations this evening, not have risen to reply to him. But I find that the standard of taste of the hon. and learned Gentleman considerably varies according to the particular position in which he finds himself. I cannot help recollecting that the hon. and learned Gentleman was one of the leading Counsel in the Special Commission—a Commission appointed under an Act of Parliament, with reference to which Act of Parliament I am informed he gave a vote. He was afterwards employed as a paid advocate, and when the Report of that Commission was laid upon the Table of this House I find that he was one of the foremost who disputed the accuracy of the findings. I see that the hon. and learned Member shakes his head. Let me read a few of his own words—

"We are invited to a discussion which I, for one, should willingly have avoided taking part in if it had been possible, in which it is necessary

to refer to the action of certain persons and to criticise some of the findings of the Judges—a bootless, purposeless discussion, which certainly does not tend to elevate the tone of this House."

And then he proceeds not only to criticise the findings of the Judges, but to deny that those findings were accurate in point of fact. As I find that the standard of taste varies according to the particular circumstances, I shall not upon this occasion adopt the view of the hon. and learned Member, but I shall rather content myself with doing what I feel perfectly justified in doing—criticising the public acts of public men put forward to carry out a public office and a public duty, and that I shall certainly do fearlessly. The hon. and learned Member criticised my action and the action of the hon. and learned Member for St. Stephen's Green (Mr. W. Kenny) upon the occasion of the opening of the Commission. I had hoped, having regard to the explanations I had already given this House, that it would not have been necessary for me again to advert to these particular circumstances; but when the hon. and learned Member charges me with having made the excuse of not being permitted to cross-examine a pretext for retiring from the Commission, I feel called upon in fairness to myself and out of the respect I owe to this House, to make a few observations with the object of rebutting such a suggestion. I never said it was because I was refused cross-examination that I withdrew from the Commission. I particularly stated in the observations I made on the occasion of the Address that I never claimed as an absolute right the privilege of cross-examination on that occasion. What I did say was this—and what I submit confidently to the judgment of this House is that under the particular circumstances of the case it was necessary for somebody to cross-examine; and certainly if a packed Commission and a partisan tribunal would not for themselves undertake the process of sifting the truth by cross-examination, then I did say, and I say still, that without some cross-examination by somebody the whole proceedings were a farce and a sham. The hon. and learned Member seems to have entirely misappreciated the position upon that point. Why did I want to cross-examine that particular witness? I thought that if there was one thing

more than another I had made clear to the House it was the reason which influenced me in coming to the conclusion that Mr. Roche ought to have been cross-examined. The hon. and learned Member, with a humour applied to a serious subject which did him credit, said that the first question I would have asked Mr. Roche was whether he stole a deer. Sir, that was not my intention. As I said on a previous occasion, and repeat now, I was aware that Mr. Roche had been inculpated in serious matters that had occurred in relation to the very properties in reference to which he was being examined. I was aware, as the hon. and learned Gentleman is aware, that Mr. Roche had been examined before the Special Commission, and I was aware that he was cross-examined for hours by the late Attorney General for England. I was also aware that, although Sir James Mathew had his cross-examination before him on the table, he had not deigned to ask the witness a single question with regard to it.

SIR C. RUSSELL: I beg the hon. and learned Gentleman's pardon. I have the authority of Sir James Mathew for stating that, while he does not doubt that he had the evidence on the desk before him, amongst a mass of other matter, his attention was not specifically called to it.

MR. CARSON: Well, Sir, that may be an excuse as to the honour of Sir James Mathew. It certainly does not add to our opinion of his competency. I can only say this: Of course, I accept at once the statement of the hon. and learned Member, but I think that if the hon. and learned Gentleman would open the evidence or the *précis* of the evidence before him, of which I had not the advantage, he will find that, so far from its being the fact that the evidence of the Special Commission was merely a number of books and documents before Sir James Mathew, he actually proved the letter from Sir Michael Hicks-Beach to Lord Clanricard's agent, not by the production of the letter itself, but by the production of the passage out of the re-examination. Does the hon. and learned Member dispute that? If that is so, I should like to know what becomes of the statement of Sir James Mathew that it was by inadvertence that the whole of the cross-examination was omitted, while the whole

of the direct examination was given. But it was not with reference to the stealing of the deer that I intended to cross-examine Mr. Roche. As I said on a previous occasion there were matters material and relevant to the issue upon which Mr. Roche was questioned before the Special Commission.

MR. T. M. HEALY (Louth, N.): I rise to Order. I wish to know whether the hon. Member for East Galway is not entitled to be called by his proper title in this House, and not by his name?

MR. CARSON: I was treating him as an ordinary witness, but it is more effective to treat him as the hon. Member for East Galway.

MR. T. M. HEALY: Your predecessor Sir, in the Chair ruled that hon. Members—[*Cries of "Order!"*]

\*THE CHAIRMAN: I cannot say that the hon. Gentleman is out of Order.

MR. T. M. HEALY: The ruling made by Mr. Courtney with reference to the description of hon. Members of this House at a time when the prison treatment of hon. Members was being debated, was that they should be referred to as Representatives of the constituencies for which they sat and not by their names.

\*THE CHAIRMAN: As a witness before the Courts the hon. Member is called by his name; otherwise, he is called by his constituency.

MR. CARSON: I do not wish to convey the slightest disrespect to anyone in calling a witness by his name, and I am perfectly willing to call the hon. Member by his constituency. But the point at which I was interrupted is a somewhat material one. On his direct examination the hon. Member for East Galway had stated that, at a particular date, if the tenants on Lord Clanricard's estate had been allowed an abatement of 15 per cent., that would have terminated the whole dispute. But what appeared on his cross-examination at the Special Commission; and that was one of the questions I wished to sift? At the cross-examination by the late Attorney General it appeared that the hon. Member for East Galway had himself been a party to a resolution binding himself and binding the tenants in the most solemn way not to accept any offer of abatement unless it was 50 per cent. .

Mr. ROCHE (Galway, E.): Will you allow me to ask the hon. and learned Member to point out in the Report of the evidence the passage in which I was a party to, and was bound by, such a resolution?

Mr. CARSON: I have not got the Report, but I will pledge myself to the statement I have made. I want to know does the hon. Member deny it?

Mr. ROCHE: Yes, Sir; I deny that I was bound by any such resolution. The charges made against me by the hon. Member are simply a re-hash of the evidence at the time of the Special Commission. At that time I was under cross-examination by the late Attorney General for two days, and I think the result was such as not to encourage further cross-examination.

Mr. CARSON: I do not know whether the result was such as to encourage cross-examination, but I can say, having read the evidence myself, I did not in the least feel deterred from the cross-examination of the hon. Member; and I do not think that the hon. Member has at all in substance denied what I was saying when I was again interrupted. I pledge myself to prove from the evidence that the hon. Member was a party to a resolution at a particular date not to accept an abatement of less than 50 per cent. Now, I want to know, does the House think that that was a material matter or an immaterial matter on which I intended to cross-examine? I read in the very Report now laid on the Table this passage—

"On the Clanricarde estate the evidence shows that the first direct demand of the tenants was not excessive."

Well, it all depends what the Commission had before them as to the first direct demand of the tenants, and if the Commission had before them, as I know they did, that the first demand was 15 per cent., it would lead to an entirely different conclusion if they heard that the demand was not 15, but 50 per cent. The reason I withdrew from the Commission was not because I was not allowed to cross-examine, but simply because I saw by the manner in which the Commission was constituted and the method of procedure adopted that they were not determined to sift the truth to the bottom. That was why I left it. The hon. and learned Member seems to have found some fault

with Lord Clanricarde with regard to the letter which he wrote. I should have thought that one of the last matters that he would have re-opened would have been any question in relation to that letter, because it does appear, to put it on the lowest ground, an unfortunate thing that Sir James Mathew, in commenting upon the fact that Lord Clanricarde had been invited to attend before the Commission, should have stated that he refused to attend. That was the chief ground of attack against Lord Clanricarde. But what transpired? Why, in a day or two it transpired, in the correspondence in the Press, and this shows the competence of the Commission, that this attack on Lord Clanricarde was groundless, and that, so far from Lord Clanricarde having refused to attend, he had never been invited to attend. He had been asked by letter to make suggestions, and he had declined, and in the heat of the moment Sir James Mathew, in a great effort to display his impartiality, construed the reply into a refusal on the part of Lord Clanricarde to attend. I had not intended, were it not for the observations of the hon. and learned Member, to revert to these matters, because, after all, the conduct of counsel on a particular occasion, if the tribunal is a competent and a fair tribunal, cannot to the extent of one iota effect the Report. The hon. and learned Member in the Parnell Commission thought it right—I suppose on the instructions of his clients—to withdraw from that Commission, and I never heard it suggested, though the hon. and learned Member is a far more influential person than I am, that the Commission, as to its procedure, wavered by reason of his withdrawal in the slightest degree from the course it had mapped out for itself, or that its Report was varied because he did not think it right to sit out the Commission. The real question here really is this, Were there any grounds—substantial, honest, constitutional grounds—for the appointment of this Commission? It occurs to me that the appointment of these Commissions ought to be looked to jealously by this House, because if these Commissions are to be turned into engines of political tyranny, all I can say is that there will be a power committed to inquire into questions for political purposes which no Executive ought to have. I

think the House will agree with me in that. I challenge from the outset the suggestions which underlie this reference to the Commission and to their Report—that there was any spontaneous movement on the part of the tenants, or any agrarian controversy, such as alleged in this Report, which justified the right hon. Gentleman in appointing this Commission. Everybody who has watched events in Ireland during the last five years knows that the Plan of Campaign did not arise out of any agrarian controversy. It was part of the premeditated and avowed plan of the Irish Nationalist Party to render the government of Ireland impossible and to drive Her Majesty's Government to exceptional legislation. The hon. and learned Member for Waterford, speaking in 1886, at the time the Plan of Campaign was adopted, said—

“Mr. Gladstone told the people of England they had to choose between coercion on the one side and Home Rule on the other. Home Rule was defeated at the last election by Great Britain, and I say advisedly that if in face of that defeat the Tories had been able to rule Ireland with the ordinary law, the result would have been in England and Scotland to throw back our cause, perhaps for a generation, and to give the lie direct to the prophecy of Mr. Gladstone. We have achieved a victory without breaking any law or committing a single outrage. Now is the time when outrages are fewer than they have been in the last five years. We have been able to force the Government to give up the ordinary law and to fall back once more on coercion. I believe if the Government are earnest in the action they have taken against John Dillon”—

that was, in proceeding against him for instituting the Plan of Campaign—

“they are on an inclined plane, and they cannot stop themselves, for at the end of the inclined plane there is a Coercion Act.”

Therefore, I say this Plan of Campaign was nothing more than a political movement, a political engine got up by hon. Members below the Gangway, in the words of the hon. Member for Waterford, to prevent the lie direct being given to the present Prime Minister, who had said that Ireland could not be governed otherwise than by repressive and coercive legislation. If that was so, I want to know what was the justification for appointing this Commission at all—a Commission every line of whose Report goes wholly and solely for whitewashing the Plan of Campaign. It states that these tenants were not fraudulent or dishonest.

What do they state that for? Is it not for the purpose of giving a justification to the institution of the Plan of Campaign?—a Plan that has been condemned by every Court in Ireland. [Sir C. RUSSELL: As a body.] The hon. and learned Member will find that whether as a body or as individuals, those who are fraudulent and dishonest and those who are not are brought into exactly the same category as regards the recommendations of the Report. They are all to have the same advantages. [*Cries of “Divide!”*] If hon. Members below the Gangway are too tired to go on with the Debate I shall move the Adjournment. What is fraud and what is dishonesty? We are asked to pay for this inquiry. Before we do so we ought to be satisfied that the Commission was properly constituted and that the recommendations are justified by the evidence. What are fraud and dishonesty if they did not exist in the Plan of Campaign? What are they if they do not describe the conduct of men who, in the language of the hon. Member for East Mayo, can pay but refuse to pay because they are in the Plan of Campaign? The Special Commission which the hon. and learned Member adorned for a time found with reference to this regulation that tenants who could pay and refused to do so at the dictation of the League were held up as persons to be applauded and followed by others. If that is not fraud and dishonesty I do not know what they are. This Commission say they see no reason why these tenants should be treated with exceptional harshness. But do they give us any reasons why they should be treated with exceptional indulgence? Take the case, for instance, of Mr. Smith-Barry. The dispute with him did not arise out of any complaint of excessive rents. It arose because he joined, as he had a right to do, a combination of landowners in regard to the Ponsonby estate. His tenants, on the suggestion of a Member of this House, taxed themselves 10 per cent. for the purpose of assisting the tenantry in another county, and then they thought it right to demand from the hon. Member for South Hunts that he should refund them that 10 per cent. with which they had taxed themselves for the purpose of fighting him. The essential point underlying this Report, and which

shows how utterly useless it is, is that the Commission drew no distinction whatever between cases where tenants might be alleged to be in the right and where tenants were in the wrong, and I want to know what is the value of the Report of this Commission? I am not going to deal at this hour of the night with the recommendations of the Commission. I brand them as audacious. I shall not say they are socialistic, because that is a term which is much abused, and I think socialism would probably be insulted by such a description, and I shall not say they are revolutionary, because revolutionary proposals as a rule have some constitutional reason or grievance underlying them, and here I find none such. They are simply fraudulent devices to fulfil political promises, the suggested rewards to be paid by a Political Party for the creation of that political capital which assisted them to power; and I shall not for a moment consider these proposals. The hon. and learned Gentleman said we could consider these proposals when the Government came, if they ever do, to legislate upon them. He is well advised in putting in "if they ever do," because no Government would venture to legislate upon such proposals. You are asked to grant a premium to members of a reckless and criminal conspiracy. You are asked to do this by a Government which is in power solely by virtue of the votes of the Irish Nationalists. The Chief Secretary once said—

"I do not think we shall be able to deal satisfactorily with Ireland until we have passed some legislation to prevent the tenants confiscating the property of their own landlords."

I venture to think that the right hon. Gentlemen when he took the Irish Members as his allies got rid of that honourable and generous sentiment, and of a great many others as well. I venture to suggest that this Report is so absolutely useless for any purpose that can be suggested, that we, as the custodians of the Public Purse, have no right to spend a penny on the Commission.

Mr. JOHN MORLEY rose in his place, and claimed to move, "That the Question be now put."

Question, "That the Question be now put," put, and agreed to.

Question put accordingly.

*Mr. Carson*

The Committee divided :—Ayes 250; Noes 287.—(Division List, No. 30.)

Original Question again proposed.

Mr. PARKER SMITH (Lanark, Patick), who had on the Paper an Amendment to the Vote relating to the Deer Forests Commission, rose, when—

Mr. JOHN MORLEY claimed, "That the Original Question be now put."

Original Question put accordingly, and agreed to.

It being after Midnight, the Chairman left the Chair to make his Report to the House.

Resolution to be reported To-morrow, at Two of the clock.

Committee to sit again To-morrow, at Two of the clock.

# GOVERNMENT OF IRELAND BILL. (No. 209.)

## SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

Mr. MARJORIBANKS fixed Monday next.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: May I ask why Monday should be named?

SIR W. HARCOURT: It is impossible to fix the exact date now. This is a mere formal matter.

Second Reading deferred till Monday next.

# DAY INDUSTRIAL SCHOOLS (SCOTLAND) BILL.—(No. 158.)

## COMMITTEE.

Bill considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Motion, made, and Question proposed, "That the Chairman do report progress, and ask leave to sit again."—(Mr. Bromley Davenport.)

Mr. CRAWFORD (Lanark, N.E.): I hope the hon. Member will withdraw his Motion. This Bill is promoted by an arrangement between Scotch Members on both sides of the House.

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

Mr. JAMES LOWTHER (Kent, Thanet): I think we should hear something about the Bill. I heard an ominous

statement made by the hon. Member opposite that there has been an arrangement, but we should like to know what is the object of the Bill?

MR. CRAWFORD: Its object is to apply to Scotland the Industrial Schools Act of England. All the hon. Members from Scotland are in favour of it.

On the Motion of MR. H. GLADSTONE, several Amendments were agreed to.

MR. STUART - WORTLEY (Sheffield, Hallam): This Bill means an additional charge on the Estimates, and I think it is very necessary to see that it is not unduly increased. On referring to the Estimates for the current year, I find that the charge for these schools in England is £8,000. For Scotland the grant is £1,500. That is obviously more than the share of Scotland for a like expenditure. We should have some assurance that the administration of this Act will be watched and care taken that Scotland does not get under it more than the Parliamentary grant.

MR. H. GLADSTONE: This Bill sets up machinery to provide for a more economical working of the schools. As far as the administration of the Act is concerned, I can give every assurance that it will be watched.

Bill reported; as amended, to be considered upon Thursday.

**MUNICIPAL CORPORATIONS ACT (1882)  
AMENDMENT BILL.—(No. 159.)  
COMMITTEE.**

Bill considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

SIR ALBERT ROLLIT (Islington, S.): I hope the Committee will allow this Bill to go through. There are only verbal Amendments in my own name.

MR. BARTLEY (Islington, N.): May I ask what this Bill is about?

SIR A. ROLLIT: The object of the Bill is to make a re-arrangement of the wards of boroughs, and it is brought in at the request of the Municipal Corporations Association.

Bill reported; as amended, to be considered To-morrow at Two of the clock.

**BARBED WIRE FENCES BILL.—(No. 176.)  
COMMITTEE.**

\*MR. A. C. MORTON (Peterborough): I think we are all agreed with regard to the Bill.

MR. R. G. WEBSTER (St. Pancras, E.): I should like to know whether it is intended to give us more barbed fences?

Committee deferred till Wednesday.

**MESSAGE FROM THE LORDS.**

That they have passed a Bill, intituled, "An Act for codifying the Law relating to the Sale of Goods." [Sale of Goods Bill [Lords.]]

**STATUTE LAW REVISION BILLS.**

That they have appointed a Committee of Six Lords, to join with a Committee of this House, to consider all Statute Law Revision Bills of the present Session, and request this House to appoint an equal number of its Members to be joined with the said Lords.

**NORTH SEA FISHERIES BILL.**

On Motion of Mr. Mundella, Bill to carry into effect an International Convention respecting the Liquor Traffic in the North Sea, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Mundella and Mr. Burt.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 259.]

**POST OFFICE (ACQUISITION OF SITES)  
(RE-COMMITTED) BILL.—(No. 256.)**

Considered in Committee; Committee report Progress; to sit again To-morrow, at Two of the clock.

**DAY INDUSTRIAL SCHOOLS (SCOT-  
LAND) [EXPENSES].**

Resolution reported—

"That it is expedient to authorise the payment, out of moneys to be provided by Parliament, of contributions towards the expenses of children sent to Day Industrial Schools, not exceeding 1s. per head per week in the case of children sent by order of a court, and not exceeding 6d. per head per week in the case of children sent without an order of a court, in pursuance of any Act of the present Session to make provision for the establishment of Day Industrial Schools in Scotland, and to amend the Education (Scotland) Acts, 1872 to 1883."

Resolution agreed to.

**HOP SUBSTITUTES BILL.—(No. 178.)**

Order for Second Reading read, and discharged.

Bill withdrawn.

House adjourned at twenty-five minutes before One o'clock.





## APPENDIX.

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### MEMORANDUM OF THE SECRETARY OF STATE

RELATING TO

### THE ARMY ESTIMATES, 1893-94.

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*Presented to both Houses of Parliament by Command of Her Majesty,  
February, 1893.*

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In this Memorandum I propose to deal only with the main details of the Estimates which require explanation.

The Estimates for 1892-93, with the Ordnance Factories Vote, amounted to £17,631,300, those for the year 1893-94 stand at £17,802,900, the increase being £171,600. The increase on the gross expenditure amounts to only £105,600, the difference between that sum and the net increase being due to a decrease of Appropriations-in-Aid by £66,000.

Measures have been adopted to equalize the number of battalions of Infantry at home and on foreign service; these measures, however, will be temporarily disturbed by the despatch of additional battalions to Egypt. The unavoidable increase in the garrison of that country will, it is hoped, be nevertheless effected in such a manner as to avoid the prejudicial results brought to notice before Lord Wantage's Committee.

The recruiting for the Army has been so satisfactory that notwithstanding the outflow of men in very large numbers from the Colours, their places have been immediately filled; with the result that the battalions have been kept constantly full throughout the year.

As it is hoped that these conditions will continue, it has been necessary to provide for the pay of a larger number of men during next year at a cost of £60,000.

A sum of £20,000 has been provided in order to revise and extend the conditions on which pay is given to men holding lance rank as corporals and bombardiers in all arms of the Service, a legitimate grievance being thereby removed. This was recommended by Lord Wantage's Committee.

I am glad to say that like conditions as regards recruiting have obtained in the Militia, and that force stands at a number 6,000 in excess of last year, £25,000 being required to meet the increased charge.

Owing to the exceptional number of men passing to the Reserve, the strength of that force is now above what it has been at any former time, and does not require to be supplemented to the same degree as formerly by the extension of the service of men beyond 12 years. In consequence of these increased numbers it is necessary to provide £55,000 for the pay of this force beyond the provision made last year.

The number of efficient Volunteers continues to increase; and, as was expected, very few indeed fail to reach what must still be regarded as a somewhat low standard in musketry.

The total amount of the net Vote for Stores shows a reduction of nearly £20,000, but as the Appropriations-in-Aid have decreased by £75,000, there is a diminution in the gross charge of £95,000.

The large supplies of small-arms already obtained permit a reduction in the sum demanded. This, however, still remains large, as it is necessary to complete as soon as possible the number required for all the Infantry Forces. It is expected that this will be effected by 31st March, 1894.

An increased expenditure is also contemplated for completing the reserves of projectiles at stations abroad, as well as for improving the material used in their manufacture.

In consequence of the large expenditure now in progress for Fortifications and Barracks, not directly chargeable to Army Votes, the Vote for Works shows a slight decrease, although provision has to be made in it for the first payment of the Terminable Annuity which is, under Statute, taken to repay the funds borrowed for the special barrack expenditure. The amount provided for the Annuity this year amounts to £32,600.

The non-effective expenditure remains the same as last year; the reduction in the charge for pensions, owing to the adoption of short service, being checked by the grants of special pensions to old soldiers who served in the Crimea and India, and by the more liberal terms of commutation allowed to pensioners resident in the colonies and foreign countries.

H. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN.

28th February, 1893.

## APPENDIX II.

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### STATEMENT OF FIRST LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY, EXPLANATORY OF THE NAVY ESTIMATES, 1893-94.

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*Presented to both Houses of Parliament by Command of Her Majesty.*

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I propose in this statement to comment briefly on some of the Votes, in order to illustrate the action of the late and of the present Board of Admiralty during the past year.

The Navy Estimates for 1893-94 amount to a net total of £14,240,100, or £100 less than the sum voted for 1892-3.

For 1892-93 the number of Officers, Seamen, Boys, Coastguard, and Royal Marines was estimated at 74,100; in these Estimates we put it at 76,700—an increase of 2,600. The Manning Committee, to which reference was made last year, have gone with great care into this subject, and the Board are carrying into effect the conclusions at which the Committee have arrived. The increased numbers shown in the Estimates are considered absolutely necessary for the present requirements of the Fleet.

The Votes for pay and victualling and cost of medical attendance have been unavoidably increased to a corresponding extent.

So long as the requirements of the nation for vessels of war at home and on foreign stations continue as they are, it will be impossible to reduce the number of officers and men serving in the Fleet, and I am not prepared to suggest any change in this direction at the present time.

#### NEW CONSTRUCTION.

The *Blenheim* and *Vulcan* of the old programme have been completed in 1892-93.

At the close of the present financial year on the 31st March, 1893, four years out of the five contemplated in the Naval Defence Act of 1889 will have elapsed. One-half of the total number of ships (70), provided for in that Act, will then have

been completed, and either in commission or ready for service. These completed ships will be :—

First-class Battle-ships—								
<i>Royal Sovereign</i> and <i>Hood</i>			...	...	...	...	2	
First-class Cruisers—								
<i>Edgar, Hawke, Royal Arthur</i>			...	...	...	...	3	
Second-class Cruisers—								
Dockyard-built		...	4	}	...	...	...	21
Contract-built		...	17					
Third-class Cruisers—								
<i>Pallas</i> class ...		...	...	...	...	...	...	4
Torpedo Gunboats—								
Dockyard-built		...	4	}	...	...	...	5
Contract-built		...	1					
								35

Of these new ships, at the close of 1892 there were in permanent commission the *Royal Sovereign*, the *Sirius* (second-class cruiser), and three of the *Pallas* class.

During the manœuvres of 1892, there were on service : the *Royal Sovereign*, 9 second-class cruisers, 1 third-class cruiser, and 2 torpedo gunboats, built under the Naval Defence Act ; a total of 13 vessels.

The progress proposed to be made in 1892-93 has been realised so far as the Dockyard work on new ships is concerned ; and in some important points has been considerably exceeded. Earlier dates of completion than were originally named have been secured for the first-class cruisers, and first-class battle-ship *Empress of India* ; and by special arrangements the first-class battle-ship *Hood* will be completed within the financial year 1892-93, instead of in the following year, as was proposed in framing the Estimates for the current year. Two torpedo gunboats, which it was proposed to complete in 1892-93, will not be quite finished, but their completion will be possible early in 1893-94.

Allusion was made last year to the remarkably rapid progress in the construction of the *Royal Sovereign*. The ship passed successfully through her steam and gunnery trials, and was commissioned on the 31st May, 1892, as flagship of the Channel Squadron. She was completed in two years and eight months from the date when the keel was laid : and this is an unprecedentedly short time for a ship of her size and type. Rapid production has tended to economy, and the actual cost of labour and materials for Dockyard work was £32,592 within the estimate of £612,000. The speedy and economical construction of this vessel affords good evidence of the efficient condition and organisation of the Royal Dockyards.

The progress of Contract work during 1892-93 on ships building under the Naval Defence Act has been satisfactory on the whole. As in previous years, although in a less degree, the conditions of the shipbuilding and engineering industries have not been favourable to rapid progress. Consequently, from causes beyond the control of either the Contractors or the Admiralty, the dates for the delivery named in the Contract have been largely exceeded in most cases.

By the 31st March, 1893, however, out of the 32 vessels building by Contract under the Naval Defence Act, it is anticipated that the following will have been delivered :—

First-class Battle-ship—							
<i>Ramillies</i>	...	...	...	...	...	...	1
First-class Cruisers—							
<i>Endymion</i> , <i>Gibraltar</i> , <i>Grafton</i>	...	...	...	...	...	...	3
Second-class Cruisers	...	...	...	...	...	...	17
Torpedo Gunboats—							
<i>Jason</i> class	...	...	...	...	...	...	4

Total 25

The *Ramillies* will be delivered about three months within the time specified in the Contract, which is a result most creditable to the builders under the special difficulties encountered during the period of her construction.

All the second-class cruisers and one of the torpedo gunboats will be completed for service by the date named.

#### PROGRAMME FOR 1893-94.

During 1893-94, the last year of the quinquennial period governed by the Naval Defence Act, a very large proportion of the 35 vessels still incomplete will be finished. It is proposed to complete *two* first-class battle-ships (the *Empress of India* and *Ramillies*) in the first half of the financial year; as well as *three* or *four* of the first-class cruisers and some of the torpedo gunboats. It is anticipated that in the latter half of the year *three* other first-class battle-ships of the *Royal Sovereign* type, *two* battle-ships of the *Centurion* type, the *two* or *three* remaining first-class cruisers, *three* second-class cruisers of the *Astræa* type, and the remainder of the torpedo gunboats (with three exceptions) will be completed. The grand total of vessels to be completed in the financial year is 26, and this total includes all the Contract-built ships, except the *Revenge* first-class battle-ship.

It is estimated that only 9 out of the 70 ships included in the Naval Defence Programme will not be completed on the 31st March, 1894. All of these ships will be approaching completion, and it is estimated that the total expenditure on all heads then remaining will amount to only about £283,000.

As regards new works not included under the Naval Defence Act: one ship, the *Renown*, has been laid down. The Estimates for 1892-93 provided for commencing two other battle-ships, but on further consideration it was found necessary to postpone the commencement of these vessels until 1893-94.

In 1893-94 it is proposed to lay down in the Dockyards some new ships, in order to maintain the strength of the Navy, with a due regard to the ships in course of construction by other Naval Powers, and to the actual waste which goes on in our own ships. This will enable us in that and succeeding years to have ships in those various stages of construction which are necessary to ensure the economical and continuous employment of the different trades in the Royal Dockyards. This is a matter of great importance in order to avoid those spasmodic discharges and subsequent re-entries of workmen which took place in former days with great disadvantage to the Service and the men themselves.

In the Dockyards, this new programme includes two first-class battle-ships, three second-class cruisers, and two sloops. It has been decided that the engines and boilers for the cruisers and sloops shall also be made in the Dockyards.

In private yards, by contract, it is proposed to commence in 1893-94 the construction of two first-class cruisers, which are to embody the results of experience gained with our existing cruisers, particularly of the *Blake* and *Edgar* classes, and in speed, coal supply, armament, and defence are to surpass any cruisers built or building. It is also proposed to order by contract 14 torpedo-boat destroyers of an improved type.

The battle-ships are to be of the type of the *Royal Sovereign*, with certain improvements. Their principal armament of heavy guns will consist of 4 12-inch B.L. new type guns, mounted in a manner that will give substantial advantages over any previous mountings. The secondary armament will be superior to that of all existing battle-ships in both power and protection. The second-class cruisers are to be improvements on the *Astræa* class, more powerfully armed, better protected, and possessing large coal endurance. The two sloops are to be improvements on the gunboats of the *Goldfinch* class, on which favourable reports have been received. These latter vessels are much wanted to take the place of older vessels on foreign stations.

#### THE "RENOWN."

This new battle-ship recently commenced at Pembroke, under the directions of the late Board, may be best described as an improved *Centurion*.

Her principal dimensions are as follow :—

Length ... ..	380 feet
Breadth, extreme ... ..	72 „
Displacement ... ..	12,350 tons.

With natural draught on the eight hours Contractor's trial, a mean speed of 17 knots is anticipated ; with moderate forced draught a maximum speed of about 18 knots will be reached.

She is to be armed with four 10-inch breech-loading guns carried in two barbettes and mounted similarly to those in the *Centurion*. Her secondary armament will be extremely powerful, including 10 6-inch quick-firing guns, 12-pounder quick-firers, and a considerable number of smaller quick-firing guns. In the protection of this secondary armament the arrangements in the *Renown* are more efficient than those in any preceding battle-ship. The armament of submerged torpedoes will also be more extensive than that in any other battle-ship.

The barbette armour will be somewhat thicker than that in the *Centurion*. The hull armour will be arranged on an entirely different principle from that which has been adopted in *Centurion*, and associated with a different arrangement of the protective deck. This point has received the most careful attention ; and it is considered that the disposition and thickness of hull armour adopted, together with the improved qualities of armour now obtainable, will make the ship well adapted for close action.

Like the *Centurion* and the *Barfleur*, the *Renown* will be wood sheathed and coppered, and will be capable of passing through the Suez Canal.

#### TORPEDO VESSELS.

The Estimates for 1892-93 provided for the commencement of 10 first-class torpedo boats, and it was proposed to spend upon them only £20,000. A larger scheme had been previously under consideration, the carrying out of which was dependent upon financial considerations. Early in the financial year the Admiralty decided, with the concurrence of the Treasury, to begin the construction of these vessels, and to accelerate the progress of the first-class boats. Orders for the latter were therefore given to certain private firms, and they are now being rapidly advanced. In speed and power of keeping the sea they will be superior to all their predecessors.

In addition six torpedo-boat destroyers of new type have been ordered with a guaranteed speed of 27 knots per hour. The orders have been placed with three private firms of high reputation, and it is anticipated that in speed, armament, and sea-going capability these vessels will be superior to any yet built. It is proposed to complete and try the first examples of the new type next summer, and subsequently to order 14 other vessels of the class from private firms during 1893-94.

#### RECONSTRUCTION AND REPAIRS.

The repair and refit of *Téméraire*, *Ajax*, *Bellerophon*, *Osborne*, *Kingfisher*, and *Bramble* will be completed in 1892-93 at the Home Yards ; the repair of the *Agincourt* and *Northumberland* has been commenced.

The reconstruction of the *Rupert* and *Hercules* will be completed in 1892-93, and that of the *Devastation* in 1893-94. The *Monarch* will be well advanced in 1893-94 so as to admit of her completion early in 1894-95. The *Sultan* has also been taken in hand during the present year and will be completed in 1894-95.

#### BOILERS AND MACHINERY.

It is satisfactory to note that the failure of some double-ended boilers of the common combustion chamber type has not led, as it was at one time thought likely, to the necessity of ordering new boilers at a very heavy cost for the *Devastation*, *Thunderer*, and *Vulcan*. Experiments happily resulted in the discovery of the simple device of a capped ferrule, or short tube, placed inside the mouths of the boiler tubes, which enables the heat generated to be more effectually distributed through the tubes, and so prevents local over-heating.

The ferrules were fitted to the boilers of the *Barracouta*, and the full indicated horse power was realised without difficulty or defect. They were also fitted in the *Thunderer*, which vessel, after going through her natural and forced draught trials most satisfactorily, steamed to Madeira and back at about four-fifths natural draught power.

The boilers of the *Devastation* and *Vulcan*, and all boilers of this type, are being so fitted.

These ferrules may be found useful also in the case of boilers of other types, as it is expected that they will prove a valuable adjunct in preventing the leakage of tubes, resulting from the accidental, or other, accumulation of grease or other deposit on the heating surfaces of the boilers.

Various types of tubulous boilers have been adopted abroad during the last few years, and the Admiralty have received some interesting reports upon the practical working of these boilers as used in large steamers of the merchant service. Boilers of English and foreign make are being fitted in two torpedo gunboats in order to test the relative efficiency of the two types.

In April last a Technical Committee, presided over by Admiral Buller, C.B., was appointed "to consider existing types and designs of propelling machinery and boilers for H.M. Ships, and to suggest improvements in future designs," and their Report has recently been received. Their recommendations are now under consideration, but in the meantime it may be stated that their investigations, which have covered all practicable ground, and have been of a most thorough character, have led to conclusions which it is satisfactory to find justify in all important respects the recent practice of the Admiralty in regard to propelling machinery.

### ARMOUR PLATE EXPERIMENTS.

During 1892-93 the experiments on armour have been continued, and satisfactory results have been obtained in the increased resistance of armour plates.

Improvements have been made both in the manufacture of compound (steel-faced iron) and steel armour plates. In the case of the compound plates the improvements have followed on the lines previously described, which give a very hard face to the plate, and consequently reduce penetration while shattering the tempered steel projectiles.

Until recently similar results had not been obtained with steel plates in this country. One of the leading armour plate manufacturers has, however, produced steel armour which has been treated in manufacture by a process originating in America, and which on trial has been found to combine in a most remarkable manner resistance to penetration with an almost total absence of cracking.

Steps have been taken to carry these experiments further, and the results may have an important influence on future construction.

### NAVAL ORDNANCE AND TORPEDOES.

The progress of gun manufacture this year has been very satisfactory, and has quite kept pace with the completion of ships.

A 12-inch B.L. steel and wire gun of a new design, intended for the armament of the new battle-ships, is now under manufacture. It is relatively, as regards weight, a much more powerful weapon than any previously constructed in this country, and will be provided with a hydraulic mounting capable of being worked *entirely* by hand power, in case of accident or failure of any part of the mechanism, and with an all-round loading position.

The whole of the condemned 6-inch Mark II., 5-inch Mark I., and 4-inch 13-cwt., and 22-cwt. Mark I. guns have now been withdrawn and replaced by serviceable guns of later pattern.

To meet the consequent requirements of 4-inch guns, a new Q.F. gun of this calibre has been designed and will shortly be under trial; experiments are now being made on a 12-pr. Q.F. ship gun, and a shorter weapon of the same



calibre for boat and field work ; the results given by the former are so promising that a number have already been ordered for the new torpedo-boat destroyers.

*Cordite*, the new smokeless powder, has continued to give satisfactory results in different climates at home and abroad, and has been used in the gunnery ships during the past year for practice ; we are now only waiting for the final report of the Ordnance Committee to adopt it for general use in the Service, when it will replace all powders hitherto supplied for Q.F. guns.

The Fleet has been re-armed with a new pattern revolver, the "Webley," which is recognised by both Services to be the most efficient weapon of the kind.

The War Office having been unable, on account of the pressing nature of their own requirements, to provide a sufficient number of magazine rifles in 1890-91 for re-arming the Navy with rapidity, it was decided by the Admiralty that, as the re-armament must be promptly and completely carried out when once commenced, the introduction of the magazine rifle must be postponed. Moreover, as the provisions of the Naval Defence Act required the completion of the new ships by 31st March, 1894, it would have been undesirable to run the risk of commencing the re-armament unless these rifles could have been supplied before that date. It is now anticipated that it will be possible in 1894-95 to proceed with the re-armament of the Navy and carry it out in that and succeeding years as originally intended.

The new Naval Ordnance Store Department has been working now for 15 months, and the result has been highly satisfactory. The depots taken over are those of Woolwich, Portsmouth, Plymouth, and Chatham, and inquiries are being made into the possibility of making similar arrangements at Malta and Gibraltar. The question of our Reserves has been most carefully gone into by the new Department, and the deficiency of stocks, to which attention was called, has proved much less than was anticipated.

### NEW WORKS, &c.

Portsmouth.—Three dredgers are being built in order to continue the deepening of the harbour, so as to give the depth of water necessary for modern battle-ships. Arrangements are in progress for proceeding at once with the construction of two additional docks suitable for the largest vessels in the Service. Provision is made in the Estimates for commencing a jetty on the southern side of the tidal basin, to facilitate the safe handling of large vessels proceeding to and from the entrance locks.

Chatham.—The deepening of the River Medway to admit of the largest vessels proceeding to and from Chatham Dockyard at every tide is still in progress. The Convict Prison will be handed over to the Admiralty early in the financial year, and the work of converting it into Naval barracks will then be commenced.

Portland.—A contract has been made for the completion of the coaling pier, and the work will be finished within two years.

Gibraltar.—Arrangements are being made for the extension of the new mole. A sum of £2,000 has been provided for improving the magazines.

Malta.—The new dock in the French Creek having been brought into use, dredging is being carried out to improve the entrance and provide a greater depth of water. Certain additions to, and improvements in Magazines and Ordnance Store Establishments, have been carried out during the current year, and a sum of £2,000 has been provided for further additions during 1893-94.

Sydney.—The new Naval establishment at Garden Island, to replace that at Circular Quay, is making good progress under the direction of the Colonial Government.

### MOBILIZATION.

A plan has been worked out, and has recently been put into operation, for bringing the mobilization arrangements into harmony with the conditions arising from the largely increased number of ships ready for immediate service. This

scheme has worked smoothly and effectively in the partial mobilizations for the annual peace manœuvres and can be as readily applied to a complete mobilization in case of war. It allows for the suitable distribution of "Active Service" ratings among the ships which would be mobilized on an emergency, and for the completion of ships' crews up to their full complements from the seamen of the Reserve.

At the partial mobilization of 1892 the united crews of the ships actually commissioned comprised 8,937 Officers and Men. As in former years, a large number of ratings had to be transferred from the other ports to Sheerness-Chatham, the figures for 1892 being 1,262. The development of the gunnery school recently established at Sheerness is expected to diminish progressively the necessity for drawing on other ports for men, but it is not proposed that the power of doing so should be abolished, it being desirable to retain a certain flexibility in our mobilizing arrangements.

The Admiralty and the War Office continue in close communication on matters connected with defence through the Joint Committees which were appointed some time back. There is every reason to be satisfied with the result of these periodical conferences.

### ROYAL MARINES.

During the past year about 1,800 men have been recruited for the Corps; these numbers were required to fill the vacancies caused by the usual waste, and also to raise the strength to the increased establishment of 14,500. It is proposed to recruit 500 more men in the course of 1893-94.

In order to obtain these numbers it has been necessary to occasionally reduce the standard to 5 feet 5 inches for growing lads, and 5 feet 5½ inches for men over 20, thus showing that in order to procure recruits of even fairly good physique, any increase of numbers should be gradual.

Nearly 8,000 trained Marines on the average have been borne afloat for the service of the Fleet throughout the financial year, and this is a steady increase on previous years. During the period of mobilization the numbers embarked exceeded for the time a total of 8,500.

### ROYAL NAVAL RESERVE.

There is still an increasing disposition on the part of Officers to volunteer for the twelve months' training in Her Majesty's Ships, and it has not been possible, for financial and other reasons, to accept all candidates who offer themselves. Those appointed have been carefully selected, and have given, but with rare exceptions, general satisfaction.

At the present time 192 Officers have served for varying periods in Her Majesty's Ships against 124 at the end of 1891.

The Lists of Officers having now reached almost the maximum number allowed by Her Majesty's Orders in Council, and there being no present need to increase the numbers allowed, it has been necessary to restrict the number of direct entries, and, in order to leave some margin for promotion, only officers in the junior ranks, and these sparingly, can be entered for some time to come.

The numbers of men of all classes have been well maintained, and it is proposed to increase the number of firemen next year by 500 men under new regulations.

With the sanction of the Treasury, most of the proposals of a Committee which sat in 1891 to consider Naval Reserve matters have been adopted, and will come into force as soon as possible, with, it is anticipated, great advantage to the efficiency of the force.

The changes may be summarised as follows:—

- (1.) It is not proposed to confer any more Honorary Commissions except on gentlemen officially connected with the Reserve, who will, during office, become *ex officio* Honorary Officers of the civilian rank. Instead of an

Honorary List there will be a Retired List for those Officers who have served on the Active List, all of whom are still liable to serve. This will not, however, alter the status of the present Honorary Officers who have not served on the Active List.

- (2) To qualify for a retaining fee of a higher rank, junior Officers will be required to undergo, after promotion, a satisfactory course of instruction and examination in one of the Gunnery Ships.
- (3) Arrangements for a higher training of Officers will be made.
- (4) Some slight modifications in the qualifications of men for entry into the First Class Reserve have been introduced, affecting only a small class of fishermen who will, however, be given the opportunity of joining the Second Class Reserve with additional advantages.
- (5) A periodical embarkation of a portion of men of the Second Class Reserve in sea-going district ships will be arranged instead of the annual drill batteries, where it is impossible to learn the routine of man-of-war life. This will be arranged so as to cause neither additional expense to the public nor less advantage to the men themselves. It is proposed that this embarkation shall take place at least once during each man's five years' engagement, but volunteers will be encouraged to come forward as often as possible during their engagement, so far as the capabilities of accommodation on board will allow.
- (6) An additional rating of able seamen with a rise in drill-pay will be conferred on second class men who qualify under a higher standard.
- (7) The recommendations of the Committee as regards firemen had been previously approved, but they will not come into force fully till this year. They practically consist of an increased retainer, a period of drill of which formerly none was required, and placing the firemen more or less on the same footing as First Class Reserve men as regards pension, kit, &c.
- (8) As soon as the clothing can be manufactured, which will not be till late in the year, the Royal Naval Reserve men will be dressed in the same uniform as that of the Royal Navy, distinguished only by a badge of R.N.R. on the cap ribbon. The first class men will be granted a free kit on enrolment, and afterwards, on every fresh five years' re-enrolment. The second class men, instead of receiving, as now, a free suit every year, will have one in the first and third years of their engagements. The difference in value to the men caused by this less frequent issue of free clothing will be made up to them by increasing their yearly retainer from £2 10s. to £3 5s.
- (9) Rules have been framed for the pay and allowances of men who are called out for active service in time of emergency on a more equitable basis than that on which previous regulations were framed.

#### NAVAL DEFENCE ACT.

By the end of the financial year 1893-94, the period fixed for the completion of the ships building under the Naval Defence Act will have expired. The financial results of the Act have been previously fully explained, but certain difficulties in administering the Act have arisen, and the Treasury have agreed that the proper way of dealing with these questions will be by legislation. A Bill will shortly be introduced for this purpose.

SPENCER.

21st February, 1893.

# I N D E X

TO

## THE PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

(AUTHORISED EDITION).

### VOLUME IX. FOURTH SERIES.

SECOND VOLUME OF SESSION 1893.

#### EXPLANATION OF ABBREVIATIONS.

Bills, Read 1 <sup>a</sup> , 1 <sup>o</sup> , 2 <sup>a</sup> , 2 <sup>o</sup> , 3 <sup>a</sup> , 3 <sup>o</sup> . Read the First, Second, or Third Time.	A. Answers. c. Commons. Com. Committee. com. Committed. Intro. Introduction. l. Lords. Obs. Observations.	Pres. Presented. Q. Questions. Rep. Reported. R.P. Report Progress. Reso. Resolutions.
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***Speaker, The* (RIGHT HON. ARTHUR WELLESLEY PEEL), *Warwick and Leamington*****COMMITTEES**

The Appointment of a Committee having been passed, a question relating to the appointment could not be raised. A proviso extending the word "Stranger" (House of Commons Admission of Strangers) could be brought forward as an Instruction to Committee *Feb* 28, 688

An incident complained of should have been raised at the moment ; it could not be raised afterwards as a point of Order *Mar* 3, 975

**SPEAKER, THE—cont.**

Discussion of Supplementary Estimates—Certain restrictions had of late years been placed upon the discussions of Supplementary Estimates, and they had been restrictions to the items which formed the bulk of the Supplementary Estimates. As a general Rule it was in Order to discuss only the particular items which constituted the Supplementary Estimates, and the sub-heads of the original Estimates could only be referred to so far as they were involved in the fair discussion of the points contained in the item asked for in the Supplementary Estimates. It would be improper, as a general rule, to raise on a Supplementary Estimate the whole question of policy involved in the original Estimate. Items of Supplementary Estimates might raise in themselves questions of policy, but the interpretation whether they did raise questions of policy or not must clearly be left to the Chairman of Committees. As an illustration: the question of the draining of any particular house in Constantinople would not raise the whole question of Foreign Embassies; but a Vote, which would largely increase the Vote, for a Railway to Uganda, might raise the whole question of the policy involved in the Original Vote for Uganda *Mar 3, 975*

Instructions to Committees—A Member must confine himself solely to the terms of an Instruction. A Bill having been read a second time, its principle had been affirmed *Mar 9, 1416*

**MISCELLANEOUS RULINGS**

*Feb 21, 16, 19, 53, 62; Feb 24, 295, 316; Feb 27, 444, 463, 464, 547; Feb 28, 554; Mar 1, 730; Mar 2, 811, 819, 914, 916; Mar 6, 1075, 1077, 1079, 1089; Mar 8, 1354, 1388; Mar 9, 1460, 1547; Mar 10, 1637, 1645, 1646, 1650*

**PRIVILEGE**

The Speaker and the "Westminster Gazette"—It was not, in the opinion of the Speaker, in accordance with good Parliamentary traditions, that when any Member took offence at the Speaker's conduct in the Chair, the Member should write to the newspapers. The Speaker was responsible to the House alone. No Member was within his right in dictating to the Speaker what course he should adopt in cases of Closure. The Closure was in the Speaker's absolute discretion, subject to the terms of the Standing Order. It was more consonant to the dignity of Members and to the traditions of the House to bring any

*Feb 23, 562*

**Telegraphs (see Post Office)**

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Questions referring to the details of coming Bills—The Speaker will decline to allow such questions to be put on the Paper *Feb 28, 572*

The purpose of a question is to ask for information, not to supply it to the House. The question whether a great number of specific rates were charged by a particular Railway Company was a dangerous precedent to set. The better course would be to submit a specific case to the Government, when the facts would be inquired into. A Member could put a question as to the whole of the rates of a Railway Company, and the carriage of coal and iron from the North might be set out and inquired into in the form of a question *Mar 10, 1620*

A question partaking of the character of an argument was not in Order *Mar 13, 1860*

**RULES AND ORDER OF DEBATE**

It was not in Order for a Member to address the House, when there was no question before it *Feb 23, 286*

Closure Resolution.—The Speaker was bound by the Standing Order. As the Motion was made, and it was not inopportune, the Speaker had no alternative but to put the Question *Feb 23, 287*

On the question of the fixing of a day for a Bill—Nothing was in Order except to show that the Bill ought to be taken at a later date than that proposed *Feb 23, 287*

An Amendment to the proposal of the Government for Morning Sittings, stating that it was inexpedient to take the time of private Members at such an early period of the Session, was out of Order. A mere negative could not be moved as an Amendment. A Member might move to reject the Motion in its final shape *Feb 27, 456*

A Member was not entitled to make references to the Speaker's action *Feb 27, 450*

Adjournment of the House to discuss Lawlessness in County Clare—Whether it was a "definite matter of urgent public importance" was a matter within the discretion of Members who might choose to support the proposal *Mar 2, 840*

An Amendment to the Motion for going into Committee of Supply (Newfoundland Fisheries Question) was the exclusive property of the Member who put it down, and could not be moved by another Member *Mar 10, 1663*

Supply—It had been the practice of the House to take money for the coming year before the Supplementary Estimates for the past year were before the House *Mar 7, 1294*

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- c. Message received from the Lords Feb 28,  
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- l. Message from the Commons Mar 9, 1405  
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